

Supply—Justice

had his name placed on the list by the former Liberal member for this constituency in May of 1957 so it must have taken Mr. Freeman some considerable time to persuade the former government of his qualifications if he was placed on the list just one month before that government was defeated. My information is that his efforts in that direction were also continued for some considerable time.

Then again, with respect to the question of whether any member of parliament interested himself in the matter, because my hon. friend seems to suggest that it was wrong for the present hon. member for Lincoln to have an interest in the matter, the correspondence establishes clearly that Mr. Freeman requested the present member for Lincoln to do what he could to have Mr. Freeman's name placed on the list. Therefore I find it extraordinary that my hon. friend should suggest there is anything wrong in finding on the file correspondence between the present hon. member for Lincoln and Mr. Freeman.

I can only say, of course, with respect to the particular terminology of one of these letters that I can take no responsibility for the phrase, "I have been asked by the Department of Justice to write you about this particular matter." I have not had the opportunity to discuss with the hon. member for Lincoln exactly why he used those words but I fancy that what he intended to imply was, "I have discussed this matter with the Department of Justice and am writing you accordingly to advise you of the situation." I say that because, as the hon. member has said, we do not ask private members of parliament to write official letters on behalf of the department. I understand that the fact is that the hon. member for Lincoln properly reported the situation as he had learned it in the course of discussions with myself and my executive assistant.

Therefore, Mr. Chairman, I do not think there is very much more to be said on that point except that I have no apologies to make for the decision I reached with regard to the question whether or not Mr. Freeman was a suitable person to recommend to my colleague, the Minister of Public Works, as a lawyer whose services should be retained by Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation. As I have pointed out, it is my responsibility from time to time to make assessments as between lawyers and in making these assessments I am required to exercise judgment as to who is the most suitable and best qualified person or persons to use, and I recognize that in forming these judgments, as in every case where judgment is necessary to be formed, there will be those

[Mr. Fulton.]

who disagree with the judgment. It does not surprise me to find that Mr. Freeman disagrees with my assessment of him but that is something which, while I may regret it, I cannot alter. I merely repeat that under all the circumstances I can see no reason why I should change my opinion or assessment and I have no intention, whether by virtue of the fact that the lawyer in question has written to my hon. friends opposite or for any other reason whatsoever, of changing that assessment.

Mr. Regier: Mr. Chairman, I think it is very obvious that if Mr. Freeman needed this work he would not have followed the course he did. He would have continued to beg the hon. member for Lincoln and the minister to be placed on the list. I suggest that Mr. Freeman's whole object was to raise his voice in objection to having been removed from the list of those eligible without cause and that the correspondence reveals that he came to the conclusion, and obviously it was the only conclusion he could come to, that the reason for his dismissal was political and had nothing to do with the work he had been doing on behalf of the crown corporation. I am very pleased to have the minister tell us that the hon. member for Lincoln had no authority to write that he had been asked by the Department of Justice to write regarding this matter.

I should like the minister also to say whether or not the hon. member for Lincoln had authority to indicate on December 16, 1957 that if Mr. Freeman would change his mind about the hon. member for Lincoln things might be different, and there might be some hope he would be again placed on the list of those eligible. I should like to know whether or not the minister knows anything about this sentence in the letter of December 16 which I quoted earlier:

If you have changed your mind about me, I could change my thoughts about you also.

I feel the minister should make it very clear that his decision concerning Mr. Freeman had nothing whatever to do with what Mr. Freeman's thinking might have been about the hon. member for Lincoln.

The minister supplied some information that seems to be at variance with the contents of this correspondence. Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation, in a letter dated October 25, 1957, file No. 100-15-6, says that in selecting legal agents they adhere to a list provided to them by the Department of Justice. The minister informs us, in response to an order of this house, that no list is in existence. The minister is in effect, therefore, saying that the general counsel