

as I have done—and I submit it is the only interpretation—then we remove the minister's objection to the letter.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: Let me say a word at this point. Taking the hon. gentleman's own interpretation of the word "political," I ask him if he thinks it is a proper thing for an officer of this government, where a difference of opinion is supposed to exist between this government and the British government in regard to a particular matter, to refer that matter to an official of the United States government and ask his adverse comment upon it. Let me cite a parallel case. At this very moment there is a difference of opinion in this country as to the attitude the British government is taking on the question of preference. An officer of the Department of Trade and Commerce here might just as Dr. Torrance did in the case the hon. member cites, and according to his own interpretation, take the view that political pressure is responsible for the position the British government is taking in this matter. Would the hon. member think it a proper procedure for an officer of the department, without the knowledge of his minister, to communicate with the Department of Trade and Commerce at Washington, and ask him his opinion as to how the matter should be dealt with? If an officer of the department saw fit to act in that way, I do not wonder that the minister would not have confidence in him.

Mr. STEVENS: The Prime Minister has missed the point. He says: "Without the knowledge of his minister". His minister instructed Dr. Torrance to ascertain how the United States department would be affected. He instructed him to write this letter.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: Instructed him to refer to political considerations?

Mr. STEVENS: No. The Prime Minister based his argument a moment ago on the fact that the minister was ignorant of all this. I am pointing out to him, just in answer to that point, that Dr. Torrance was instructed to write that letter.

Mr. MOTHERWELL: Not that kind of letter.

Mr. STEVENS: This letter is a confidential letter. It does not refer in an offensive way to political influence. There is nothing of an offensive character in the language, even though one chose to take that view which I cannot see any ground for. Let us examine the letter again. After several paragraphs

[Mr. Stevens.]

to which the minister takes no objection, dealing with the whole question of quarantine, Dr. Torrance states:

If political considerations are to be introduced into the consideration of the question of quarantine it places the scientific advisers of the respective governments in a very anomalous position, and I feel that where we have to undertake the responsibility of carrying out any regulations that are made we should also have a decided influence in the planning of these regulations.

Then he goes on:

Should political pressure force me to accept a shortened period of quarantine for imports from the British Isles I have been wondering what would be the attitude of your bureau in regard to the matter.

What pressure could there be other than political pressure? The pressure is the relations existing between Canada and Great Britain as affecting the removal of the embargo in Great Britain and the shortening of the quarantine period in Canada. The word "political" is very properly used there. Dr. Torrance says this: "I believe our quarantine period of thirty days should be maintained, but this pressure, owing to these negotiations, may force me to shorten that period". He

does not say this, but this, of 10 p.m. course, is inferred in the object of the whole correspondence—"Should I be forced to reduce that period, what are you going to do to our cattle? Are you going to shut our cattle out or are you going to increase your period of quarantine?" It must be borne in mind that these negotiations between the department in Washington and our department in Canada had been going on for years. They had been running on harmoniously in regard to these matters and the question was a very serious one. Dr. Torrance, at the instructions of the minister, seeks to find out what the attitude of Dr. Mohler would be. To show that Dr. Mohler took no wrong impression out of this, we have already read to-night a letter from Dr. Mohler showing that no such idea entered his head. Then, we have his reply which I might read again—I do not suppose that is necessary—a perfectly courteous reply that has in it no suggestion of there being anything offensive in this letter.

I want to make this appeal to the Prime Minister: Supposing he grants that there was in the wording of this letter something other than the skill of an experienced diplomat, would that be an offence for which a servant of his standing should be summarily dismissed? I put this to the Prime Minister? He is in charge of External Affairs; supposing an under-secretary of External Affairs wrote a letter that was not couched in quite the terms that he approved and he later ascer-