

Inquiries of the Ministry

Mr. Pearson: Mr. Speaker, I have already tried to deal with this question and I do not think I can add anything to what I have said.

Hon. D. S. Harkness (Calgary North): Mr. Speaker, in connection with this matter I wonder whether the Prime Minister can inform us how many other Canadian citizens were involved with or approached by these Russian agents in addition to the two who have been mentioned in the newspapers and to whom he has referred? Also, over how much of the country were these activities spread? It is mentioned in the newspapers that information was being secured about the pipe line to the Pacific coast, and it causes one to wonder into what parts of the country these espionage activities extended.

Mr. Pearson: I will get all the information I can and which it is appropriate to give to the House. I would remind my hon. friend, and I do so in no critical way, that when a similar matter was raised in the House of Commons in October, 1957, the Secretary of State for External Affairs of that day replied "It is not considered in the public interest to provide information about a matter of this kind".

Mr. Diefenbaker: Mr. Speaker, I rise immediately on a question of privilege. This is quite a different matter. These are allegations of wrongdoing. We have had enough hiding in the Rivard case, we have had enough hiding in the Department of Justice, and we want no more of this concealment on the part of the Government.

Hon. Marcel Lambert (Edmonton West): A supplementary question to the Prime Minister, Mr. Speaker. In answer to the hon. Member for Red Deer the Prime Minister indicated that he issued a news release on Saturday because it was felt the news was going to leak out. Will the Prime Minister advise us when it was intended to give out the information with regard to this matter, or was it going to be covered up entirely?

Mr. Pearson: No, Mr. Speaker, it was the intention to make this matter public in the form of a press release, and I had hoped that would also have been done in the House of Commons today.

Mr. Eldon M. Woolliams (Bow River): A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Has anybody been charged with the offence to date?

Mr. Pearson: No, Mr. Speaker.

[Mr. Caouette.]

Mr. Woolliams: Is it the intention of the Government to charge anybody in reference to this espionage?

Mr. Speaker: Order. It does seem to me we have had a fairly wide discussion, especially in view of the statement of the Prime Minister that he will be making a full, detailed statement later.

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Burnaby-Coquitlam): A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. In view of the intention of the Prime Minister to make a statement later, I wonder whether now or when he makes that statement he will tell us if the Canadian civil servant who it is alleged was involved is still in the employ of the Government.

Mr. Pearson: That will be in my statement, Mr. Speaker. I cannot answer that categorically at the moment.

Mr. Thompson: Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is related to one I have asked several times in the last few weeks. Is the Government considering the preparation of a White Paper which would outline the extent of foreign espionage in Canada and disclose the subversive tactics now being used by foreign powers in this country with regard to all aspects of our national life, and not just defence?

Mr. Pearson: No, we have not planned to issue a White Paper of that kind. It should be possible when the Committee on External Affairs is set up, which I hope will be soon, for this question to be discussed by that Committee.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**LEGISLATION TO BE CONSIDERED
FOLLOWING SUPPLY MOTION**

On the orders of the day:

Hon. Michael Starr (Ontario): Mr. Speaker, I should like to address a question to the Government House Leader and preface it by saying that so far as the Official Opposition are concerned we would like to proceed with the legislative program rapidly. In view of the fact that the debate on the Speech from the Throne and the debate on the budget have been concluded recently, coming as they did closer together than is usual, would the Government House Leader be prepared to proceed with legislation today if we pass the motion to go into committee of supply without debate and call 10 departments? If so, what are the items of legislation he intends to bring forward?