



- passed

Daily News Correspondent

JOHANNESBURG: A  
note passed to Dr Con-  
nie Mulder, then  
Minister of Informa-  
tion, . by the then

Prime Minister, Mr

Vorster, during a par-,

liamentary .debate on  
the Citizen, has. be-

come the new . centre -  
information-

of the

seandal:â\200\231 7y  
Dr Mulder told of the

note in a statement to the

" Sunday newspaper Rap-

port. e

!He said the note was  
during .a  
â\200\230parliamentary debate in  
May 1978 when opposition  
MPs, notably Mr Japie  
Basson - (PFP), were  
demanding whether the

Citizen or other publica--  
tions were secretly funded

by the Government.  
Mr Vorster, Dr Mulder

said, then sent him the

note. It said: â\200\234I think you  
must answer the question  
as follows: The Depart-  
â\200\230ment of Information owns  
no newspaper in South  
Africa - and runs, no  
â\200\230newspaper in South  
Africa.â\200\235

Dr Mulder said in his  
statement: â\200\234From this note  
I deduced that I was cer-

tainly not bound to reveal  
the project.â\200\235

He answered the ques-  
tion using the words in  
the note.

However, Mr Basson  
replied that the question  
had not bÃ©en answered  
â\200\230and again asked whether  
secret Government funds  
were made available to the  
Citizen.

Dr Mulder replied: â\200\234I  
have already answered.â\200\235  
But Mr Basson continued  
to press for an answer to  
the question.

Dr Mulder then replied:  
â\200\234I will directly answer by  
saying the Department of  
Information did not give  
funds to the Citizen.â\200\235

In his statement, Dr

Mulder said he had to -

make a decision on the  
spur of the moment.

â\200\234The clash of duties that  
arose here was between an  
oath of secrecy which I  
had made as a Cabinet

Minister on the one side

â\200\230and the. convention and  
" tradition of Parliament not

to mislead the House on

-â\200\230the other. , Â°

â\200\234Within a few seconds I

" had to choose between the.  
~two duties. It was almost

an impossible choice, espe-  
Â«cially: seen in the light of  
the fact that except from  
the then ' Prime Minister  
and Miâ\200\230qâ\200\231istet';Horwood, the

â\200\234members of the Cabinet

did not know -of our invol-

vement at that stage.â\200\235  
Dr Mulder said the

Governments desire - - to

have an English-language

. paper â\200\230â\200\234ran like a golden threadâ\200\235 since its establish-

â\200\230ment â\200\230of To the Point magazine was ~established

\_ with funds from the Prime

Ministerâ\200\231s budget, he said.

Later the Prime Minister gave R2-million to the Department of Informa-tionâ\200\231s secret < funds to enable it to continue with the magazine.

The. next attempt to obtain an English language organ occurred when Dr Mulder said he was called to Mr Vorster's office and found Dr Koornhof, then Minister of Sport, there.

Dr Koornhof said the Natal Mercury was for sale.

Dr Mulder said Dr Koornhof had testified to the Erasmus Commission that the proposed purchase of the Mercury had nothing to do with the State, but was a private undertaking

Dr Mulder asked why Dr Koornhof discussed . this with him and the Prime Minister if it were â\200\230a private undertaking.

He then told of a braai on August 9, 1973, when the new Boss offices in Pretoria were opened

This was when Mr van Zyl Alberts suggested buying shares in the Saan group so as to control it.

The original desire to have an English-language paper ran ike a golden: thread from the creation of To the Point via the Mercury project, the Saan project and crystallised

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Barrie, former Secretary for Information and former auditor-general, who denied Dr Mulder's claim' he helped decide that the State should found the magazine To The Point.

Mr Justice Erasmus said last week that Dr Mulder was told he could have access to the documents he sought provided he took the oath first.

Dr Mulder denied he was told this. If he had been, his position would have been entirely different. ' »

Hitting back at Dr Mulder, the judge said Dr

Mulder knew exactly what

Daily News Cox's respondent

the procedure was as he had testified twice before

to the Commission and the matter had been explained to him again when he appeared before the Commission last week, prior to refusing to testify.

Mr Justice Erasmus said that as the Commission sat in camera, witnesses first had to take the oath before being asked to give previous evidence. This was to ensure they did not divulge the contents of such evidence.

We then put all the facts given by previous witnesses, including documents that he may wish to see, the judge said. Dr Mulder could have asked for an adjournment to examine the documents.

In addition, documents not previously used as testimony were made available to Dr Mulder.

â\200\234He did not want to give evidence .ecause he did not want to be cross-ex- amined,â\200\235 the chairman of the Commission said.

He asked why Dr Mulder went to the Press

shown -

with further claims that a three-man . cabinetâ\200\231 com- mittee approved secret

â\200\230projects.

The. judge

forward to tostify on this

to the: Commission -after Â°

the - Commission invited

anyone to give evidence on -

cabinet participation before publishing its in- terim report.

The

judge said a

decision on whether Dr

Mulder would be charged under the Commissions Act for failing to give evidence would be made this week.

Dr Mulder also stated at the weekend that the news magazine To The - Point was initally financed from the budget of the former Prime Minister, Mr Vorster.

He said the decision for the State to finance the magazine was taken by himself, Mr Vorster, Dr Diederichs (then Minister of Finance), General van den Bergh (then head of the Bureau for State Security) and Mr Barrie (then Secretary for Infor-

said Dr Â° Mulder should have come Â°

mation)

â\200\230Mr Barrie, who retired recently as auditor-general,

denied he was part of any such group. â\200\234I had no power, as Secretary for Information, to give any approval . for any project not financed by the Department of Infor-

â\200\230mation,â\200\235 Mr Barrie said.

He pointed out that Dr Mulder said this was

\* financed from the Prime

Min@stetâ\200\231s vote.

Mr Barrie also issued a lengthy statement re-jecting an accusation by Senator Warwick Webber of the New Republic Party that Mr Barrie had shown contempt for Parliament in handing his secret report on the Department of TInformation to Mr Vorster and Dr Mulder rather than to Parliament.

He said it would have been irresponsible as he did not have proof beyond reasonable doubt on unauthorised spending and falsification.

The Official Secrets Act and the Bureau for State Security Act also preclud-ed him from auditing secret projects, said Mr Barrie.