

Yard officers investigate 'blue film' allegation

By Stewart Easdale

The South African Government last night strenuously denied newspaper allegations that a diplomat had tried to smear a British politician by obtaining an incriminating "blue" film.

Scotland Yard said yesterday that detectives from its CI department, which deals with serious crime, were investigating "criminal allegations" against Mr J. L. Rousseau, a second secretary at the South African Embassy, made in a letter from *The Guardian* to the Home Office.

The affair began with a report in *The Guardian* on May 15. A long statement issued by the South African Embassy in London yesterday said that legal action was being considered. The statement was based on a transcript of a conversation at the embassy between Mr Rousseau, a Mr Andre Thorne, and Mr Peter Hillmore, a reporter for *The Guardian*.

The Guardian pointed out last night that the South African Embassy had waited four days before making its response, and that the statement answered none of the questions raised in the newspaper's report.

The South African statement said Mr Rousseau was approached by Mr Thorne, who offered him an incriminating film. Mr Rousseau made it plain that neither he nor the South African Government was interested. Later an appointment was made and Mr Thorne arrived with Mr Hillmore, who called himself "Peter Horn".

A tape recording of the conversation was heard by representatives of *The Guardian*, the statement said.

The South African Government said it was Mr Hillmore who named the politician. During the conversation Mr Rousseau suggested that the matter had criminal implications and should be referred to the police.

"The *Guardian's* allegations, furthermore, that Rousseau made the initial contact with Thorne is disproved by Thorne himself when Rousseau pointedly put it to him that it was he who made the contact with Rousseau and Thorne replied in the affirmative", the statement said.

It continued: "From *The Guardian's* report of May 15 it is also clear that this person was in touch with Hillmore (on April 12) and that the alleged first contact with Rousseau only took place on the 14th."

Describing the rest of the interview, the statement says that Mr Thorne, who was supposed to be selling the film,

Continued on page 2, col 1