

deport them. But my contention is that there should be a trial. I do not think men should be deported from this country simply after an investigation by the Immigration department. As residents of this country for a considerable number of years certainly they ought not to be deported without a full, fair trial.

I should like to ask the minister several questions. First of all, were any specific charges laid against these men? Again, under whose authority were they transferred from Winnipeg to some eastern point? I should like to know where they are now and before whom they are to be tried. It seems to me that an important principle is at stake. If I understand anything at all about British legal practice, even the worst criminal has a chance to make his defence and is given a fair trial. I cannot understand this procedure at all. I hope the Minister of Justice, under whose direction the Royal Canadian Mounted Police seem to be acting, can throw some light upon the matter.

Mr. GUTHRIE: Under the act the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, among other things enforce federal laws, and they act under the instructions of any department that may seek their services. In the case just stated by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre, the instructions to the police would come from the Department of Immigration. The police respond when they are informed by the department that their services are required. I have nothing to do with the instructions given; in fact I had not heard of these cases until today.

The immigration laws of this country are on the statute books, and have been unaltered for many years. I have never heard of their being abused, although they have been criticized. An action taken under the immigration laws is not like a trial of either a civil or a criminal action. When my hon. friend says that these men must have a trial, the trial which he speaks of is an investigation which will take place under the provisions of the law of this country which we are all supposed to know and to obey. The men were taken into custody at the request of the Department of Immigration in Winnipeg, and I understand that the board of investigation which is to consider their cases will meet in Halifax, when a number of cases are to be considered. When the board is constituted it hears the case and then makes its report to the department; the minister of the department reviews the finding of the board, and if he finds that the Immigration Act of Canada has been contravened he can, in certain cases, order

[Mr. Woodsworth.]

deportation. I pass no opinion whatever upon these cases, because I know nothing about them save what I have heard yesterday and to-day. I think I can assure my hon. friend that the law has been carried out, at least by the police. They are very careful and exact in practically everything they do; there may at times be exceptions, but, generally speaking, they are a force upon which we can depend to the utmost, and we are always inclined to believe their proceedings to be very regular.

Mr. WOODSWORTH: The Minister of Justice will understand that I am not in any way blaming the mounted police for carrying out their instructions. I do not know sufficient about these cases to be able to say whether or not the men in question have violated the immigration laws, but it is rather unusual that I should be unable to obtain any information from the Immigration department.

Mr. GUTHRIE: I think the minister would give every detail sought by my hon. friend if he asked for it. I know he is not backward in furnishing information.

Mr. WOODSWORTH: I appealed to the officer immediately in charge and he told me I could get the information only from the minister. When I apply to the minister he tells me he does not know anything about the case.

Mr. GUTHRIE: At that time he probably did not know very much about it, but I feel certain I can obtain the details from the minister, and I will help my hon. friend if he desires.

Mr. WOODSWORTH: What I am particularly interested in to-night is not the guilt or otherwise of the men, but the procedure adopted in these cases. The minister is an able lawyer; I am only a layman, I should like to know from him if men can be arrested in Winnipeg, without any charge being preferred against them and transferred to Halifax to be tried.

Mr. GUTHRIE: If, in the opinion of the Immigration department, men liable to deportation are not desirable subjects of this country, they may be taken into custody pending an investigation of their case. There have been many such investigations, but it does not follow that in every case deportation has followed. I assume the investigation is fairly conducted under the provisions of the law; I have not heard of any cases of hardship, nor have I had complaints of maladministration of the act. I assume in these cases