

Hon. H. A. BRUCE (Parkdale): Mr. Speaker, the statement which the Minister of Justice (Mr. Lapointe) gave to the house on Monday of last week, while helpful in some respects, does not deal with an important aspect of the situation. The scolding which he administered to those of us who are seriously concerned about possible fifth column activities will not help to relieve our anxieties.

It is foolish for the dominion leaders to deny that they have been lax in the matter of rounding up the agitators. For many months now, action has been awaited, but the government has apparently been waiting for the various groups to start something and then it will be too late.

The Minister of Justice stated on Monday of last week that no active sabotage had yet taken place. Surely he does not intend the police force to continue to stand idly by watching aliens, and do nothing until they have committed sabotage. The world has had many illustrations of the serious consequences of fifth column activities. There is no doubt now that the break through of the powerful German mechanized army into neutral countries was made possible by fifth column traitors in those countries. We have, in addition, the great betrayal by a king, which jeopardized the safety of the British and French forces in Belgium, while they were responding to his urgent call for help, but thank God the day was saved almost by a miracle—the glorious, almost impossible achievement of the British army, navy and air force, ably assisted by her illustrious ally, France. When even a king was capable of being a traitor to his own people and to his allies, why should there be any qualms about internment, until the war is won, all suspected aliens of German birth? Now that Mussolini has taken his appointed place among our treacherous enemies, enemies also of mankind, will the Minister of Justice give an assurance to the house that he will immediately make use of the powers vested in him by regulation 21 of the defence of Canada regulations?

The Minister of Justice told us that the police were keeping careful watch on these people now increased in number by the entry of Italy into the war, but I ask him how this is possible when the whole Royal Canadian Mounted Police, even with the additional five hundred which he promises, will enable us to have only one member of this force per mile across Canada from east to west and none at all from north to south? Even if supplemented by the local police, and by the small home guard of three thousand, spread over our vast country they are powerless to prevent sabotage. The fact that as yet none

has taken place in no way allays our fears. The fifth column working underground was so successful in Oslo that fifteen hundred Germans succeeded in capturing a town of 300,000 inhabitants without a shot being fired.

A number of members of this house have already drawn the attention of the government to the exposed position of some of our great public utilities.

The Prime Minister (Mr. Mackenzie King) in the house yesterday stated that at the beginning the government was criticized on the ground that the regulations were too severe, and is criticized now on the ground that they are not severe enough. My criticism is simply that the Minister of Justice has failed to use the power vested in him by regulation 21, and as a consequence there are thousands of potential quislings entirely free to roam about our country, to prepare plans in advance and to strike and perhaps cripple us at vital points at the moment when it suits their employers to have them do so.

Mr. SLAGHT: Will the hon. member permit a question now, or would he have me wait?

Mr. BRUCE: I would rather finish, if the hon. member does not mind.

May I refer to a speech delivered in part with this grave question of subversive activities delivered on Friday last, June 7, by a prominent Liberal, Hon. Gordon D. Conant, attorney general of Ontario. He was speaking at a banquet of the University college Alumni association in Hart house, Toronto, and specifically dealt with the following statement recently made in this house by the Minister of Justice:

It is a great disservice to Canada and the allied cause to spread stories that Canada is filled with enemy agents and enemy sympathizers.

The attorney general said that if in this statement the minister meant that exaggerated and alarmist stories are a disservice, he entirely agreed. But he could not agree that it is a disservice to discuss and to make known conditions which on reasonable and proper grounds are believed to exist. The danger, he held, is much more likely to be overcome by realizing and facing the facts than by closing our eyes to them. Nor could he, from his daily experience with subversive activities, and reliable information in his possession, share the confidence of the Minister of Justice that the so-called fifth column is being adequately met by the police and the authorized military guards. Mr. Conant agreed that the police were aware of most, if not all, the enemies within our gates,