

sideration, not only with Commissioner Perry, but with the military authorities and with the authorities of some of the provinces, if I recollect correctly; and on the whole, we thought the circumstances justified the action which was taken. If there are men there who are doing nothing, who, as my hon. friend says, are simply tired from being idle, that is a condition to which attention must necessarily be given. I shall forward the observations of my hon. friend to the commissioner of the Royal Northwest Mounted Police, invite his attention to them and ask for a report in regard to the matter. There is no disposition on my part to have men stationed or engaged where their duties are not of a useful character, but I would have my hon. friend bear in mind that any organized group of men employed by the people of the country for garrison or protective purposes cannot, in the very nature of things, be fully occupied all the time. It goes without saying that there are men engaged in the military service of this country in garrison and outpost duty whose time is not always fully employed. They are kept there waiting for a possible condition in which their services would be required. That, to a certain extent, is the case of the Royal Northwest Mounted Police. Still, my hon. friend's observations are of a character which makes it desirable that I should communicate them to the commissioner and ask for his observations and report with regard to them.

Mr. R. B. BENNETT: I think what my hon. friend from Moosejaw (Mr. Knowles) has said, while it naturally is entitled to the utmost consideration with respect to the territory to which he alludes, cannot find very much application in the province in which I reside. There are not very many idle mounted policemen in that part of Canada. There are the officers commanding various divisions at centres; they have always been there, and they discharge more or less administrative duties with respect to those units of the force that are out on patrol duty. They have always done that while I have been in the West—before there were provinces, and since. Undoubtedly the conditions to which the Prime Minister referred were very serious. Nothing in my judgment will ever take the place of the red coat of the mounted policemen in Western Canada as regards the preservation of regard for order and respect for the law. I have seen nothing that quite equalled it with the newcomers who come to our west-

[Sir Robert Borden.]

ern land from abroad. It is saying nothing that is not common knowledge to every member of this House when I intimate that Commissioner Perry reconsidered the whole question of the placing of his patrols, and located them throughout western Canada, having regard not only to border conditions, but to our foreign-born population of enemy extraction. I remember, not long since, looking over the points at which those patrols were located, and you will find that, in every section, there is a very strong and earnest opinion on the part of English-speaking citizens that the force is too small. I have received many communications urging that the force be increased because of the conditions that have arisen, and if my hon. friend is reading the newspapers, as doubtless he is, he will observe that, in more than one case—aye, in more than half a dozen cases recently—barns have been destroyed in western Canada, and some of the crops have been threatened under circumstances that speak of very great activity on the part of the enemies within our gates. And the earnest appeals that have been made to some of us at least to insure, by taking timely warning, against a recurrence of these evils, especially having regard to the ripening of the harvest, have been very pressing. If there are only 800 men in the force, when you come to consider that they are patrolling a territory a thousand miles in length and eight times the size of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, I do not think this House will be greatly impressed with the suggestion that 800 men are too many. They are preserving law and order 300 miles north of Edmonton. There is also a detachment at Fort McMurray, and a detachment further north, which, of course, is in the unorganized Northwest Territory. Part of these 800 men are also preserving law and order 100 miles south of Macleod, which is distant from Edmonton 300 miles. So, you have in Alberta detachments of the Royal Northwest Mounted Police carrying the gospel of observance of the law and regard for property and civil rights over a territory 700 miles in length. They are also preserving law and order along the boundary from Manitoba to the Rocky mountains, a distance of 800 miles at least. So, while there may be instances such as those to which my hon. friend has referred, it cannot be said that these men are in any sense idle. Most of the young men in the force have sought, and sought in vain, to get into the regular forces. Now and then