

Supply—Justice

was recorded in that file. I suppose he was not eligible for a pension because he was in good condition.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Did he knock them into the left field?

Mr. Peters: I was not advised into what field he knocked them but he certainly must have knocked them into the political field in order for the mounted police to have kept a record of it. I have another question to raise. Under what circumstances does the R.C.M.P. have the right to demand information given by those people who saw fit to volunteer in the last war including fingerprints and other identification marks? Under what circumstances and conditions are they allowed to distribute that type of information across the country?

With regard to the political file kept on myself I wish to point out that it is also kept at all the border crossing points. I am using my own case as an example because it is one of hundreds and after being checked it was found that there was nothing criminal involved in it. Whenever I go to cross at a border point, without any questions being asked in particular except my name and a few other pertinent facts, I am asked to step inside and they haul out the file examine it and then comment that everything is fine, there is nothing in it.

I am wondering if the R.C.M.P. have set up files of this type as anti-labour files to be used in certain instances? In cases where files are maintained, under what circumstances is the information contained therein given to the provincial police force, the municipal police, and municipal and provincial courts of law. Is the information that is kept distributed generously and indiscriminately to other sources. Is the purpose of the R.C.M.P. in small communities to supervise such acts as the one in which the Minister of Justice has been so interested relating to the improper use of comic magazines and that type of thing or is that administered by some other group in this country. I am inclined to believe that the police spend more time on this political aspect than they do on some of the work they are supposed to do. If a file is maintained on myself I am quite sure there is no one in the House of Commons today on whom the R.C.M.P. do not maintain a file. If that is so, how many personnel are involved in this and to what extent is the provincial police force used for that purpose?

Mr. Fulton: Mr. Chairman, I think I must answer one of the remarks made by the hon. member for Timiskaming immediately. I understand and I think I can state as a fact that there is not a file kept on every one

in public life in Canada. Files are started only if there comes to the attention of the police, either of their own discovery as it were or by virtue of some report which they receive, information which appears to warrant the starting of a file in connection with anyone whether he be in political life or in any other form of activity. It will I am sure be appreciated that quite often information is received which, if correct, would warrant the gathering of further information, the opening of a file and the conduct of an investigation. In many cases the investigation reveals the fact that the original information received was not correct and the file then becomes inoperative. It is still retained on file, it is true, but it is inoperative and nothing further is ever done with it unless some organization, it could be a police force, which has a legitimate interest in knowing what information is on that file and some one who will establish his entitlement or right to get that information asks for it. Only in such a case is the information given to any one other than the proper authorities in the police force itself.

I think I must at once correct what would otherwise stand as uncontradicted assertions, namely that there is a file on everyone in political life. That is not correct. The other assertion that information is distributed across the country, I can assure the hon. gentleman, is not a correct assertion. It is given only to persons who establish their right to it and their proper interest in the matter and who must also establish the fact that they will keep it confidential in the way in which it is supposed to be kept.

Mr. Lewry: Mr. Chairman, on the point the minister just mentioned, during the last election campaign in Saskatchewan a member of parliament at that time was reported to have had available to himself, and was flashing on the public platform in a constituency which I will make clear now was not my own, a portion of an R.C.M.P. file on a man of different political opinion from himself. The minister said the information would be made available to members of the police force and I am interested in knowing if such information would be made available to a member of parliament or any other officer within the government for use for political purposes? I should like to have the minister's assurance that this is not the case.

Mr. Fulton: Mr. Chairman, if I said what the hon. gentleman suggests that I said, I was incorrect. It is not given to every policeman. It will be made available to the proper