

Supply—Justice

back to 1914. Is the compensation rate based on earnings at that time or on the cost of living at the present time? It seems to me that the pensions are extremely low and are insufficient to maintain anybody under present conditions.

Mr. Fulton: I think there are only three pensions under this item.

Mr. Peters: Two.

Mr. Fulton: Perhaps my hon. friend is talking about the statutory item, which technically is not before the committee.

Mr. Peters: No.

Mr. Fulton: I can say that I am informed that, in the discussions with treasury board, treasury board say they are prepared to authorize only the level comparable to that being paid by provinces. From time to time there are adjustments, depending on the adjustments that may be made in the level of provincial compensation.

Item agreed to.

At one o'clock the committee took recess.

AFTER RECESS

The committee resumed at 2.30 p.m.

ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

Headquarters administration and national police services—

362. Operation and maintenance, \$6,270,114.

Mr. Pickersgill: Mr. Chairman, I intend to discuss one aspect and one aspect only of the administration of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, and that is the matter of the refusal of the minister or of the government—and I intend to say something about which it was in the course of my remarks—to reinforce the Royal Canadian Mounted Police in Newfoundland when the attorney general of that province requested this government to do so on March 11 last. I realize that anyone speaking on this subject under the rules of the committee is under certain disabilities, and I am going to make every effort to be strictly relevant to the rules. I recognize, as I said in another context last night, that the question of the meaning of this contract and the contractual obligations thereunder are before the courts. While I have my own opinion as to what that means, I recognize it would not be proper to debate that question in this place when it is being concurrently considered in another place and is therefore sub judice. I also intend to avoid any discussion of the situation in Newfoundland that made the attorney general of the

[**Mr. Peters.**]

province in his wisdom ask for these reinforcements, because it seems to me it would be wholly improper for us in this chamber under our federal system of government, to be debating matters which are within provincial jurisdiction. I certainly do not intend in this opening statement of mine, to enter into that at all, and I hope that other hon. members intend to follow the rules of this house in the same way.

In order to give the background of what I want to say I would like to ask members of the committee to cast their minds back to March 11 last when something not quite unprecedented but I think very unusual in the experience of most of us in this house happened. I have been in Ottawa a rather close observer of parliament since the year 1937 and the session of 1938, and it has almost invariably been the rule for the minister of justice, no matter who occupied that office, when questions were asked about the administration of justice within a province to point out that that matter was a purely provincial one and to give no further answer. I think that what the Minister of Justice did on March 11 at 2.30 in the afternoon was right. Here was a situation that did, not directly but indirectly, affect the members of this house, and the minister gave what I regard as a wholly admirable, just and fair statement of the situation with respect to the mounted police as it was up until that time. It was a statement every word of which I agree with, a statement which I consider wholly admirable and proper, and I want to emphasize that very strongly.

I will not read the whole statement into the record, but I would like to emphasize one or two points which the minister made with regard to this matter. At page 1825 of *Hansard* for March 11 he said:

The fact that there is a strike, however, does not relieve the police of their responsibilities in this field—

The minister had just referred to law enforcement in the preceding paragraph; and if the minister feels I am not reading enough, I am sure he will tell me.

—but on the contrary imposes upon them extra duties of taking precautions—

And I emphasize the words "extra duties".

—to see that the tension and bad feelings engendered are not in fact allowed to result in general lawlessness and violence. They must—

And I emphasize that word too.

—protect the public—and this includes those involved in the dispute—against the possibility of excesses arising out of the tense situation.

In addition, under strike conditions there arises the further obligation of enforcing section 366 of the Criminal Code, which deals specifically with picketing and makes it unlawful for anyone engaged in picketing to use violence or threats of violence