

The hon. member for Parry Sound (Mr. Slaght) has suggested an amendment to the resolution, that the following words should be added after the word "regulations" in the third but last line:

. . . and the question of appropriate punishment for war offences. . . .

I have discussed that with him and he agrees to the following change:

. . . the question of appropriate punishment for infringements thereof—

That is, the defence of Canada regulations.—and for any other offences against the safety of the state. . . .

With this amendment, my hon. friend will be able to raise the question which he discussed yesterday in his address.

I do not think I should say more, except that I shall be pleased if the committee make any recommendation which they believe will improve the regulations.

I again take opportunity to ask the people of Canada everywhere to remain calm, steady, not to get unduly perturbed by rumours of all kinds which are being circulated. As a matter of fact, members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police tell me that they are—

—swamped with a flood of complaints regarding alleged subversive activities. Old incidents—

I am reading their very words.

—second-hand gossip, a German-sounding name, a Teutonic haircut, almost anything now assumes a sinister aspect and immediate and drastic action is demanded of the police.

They tell me that:

Reports received from police posts throughout the country indicate that peace officers are facing the situation with good common sense. Nevertheless, much valuable time is being wasted. Consideration is being given to enlisting the cooperation of the press in an effort to abate the nuisance.

In this connection may I read an extract from a letter from the attorney general of British Columbia in which, after submitting certain suggestions with regard to the general problem, he writes:

Our police, of course, are vigilant in cases of activities which are offences against the code or the defence regulations, and are cooperating to the fullest extent with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, but it is very difficult indeed to secure actual evidence against any one. The rumours that are spreading from time to time are generally without any evidential foundation.

I noted with interest your remarks in the House of Commons in connection with the spreading of rumour, and your advice that any information any citizen had in his possession should be told to the police, and not to his neighbours. It occurs to me that the country would be saved a considerable amount of unrest if it were made an offence to spread rumours. I do not know what the temper of the people is in the rest of Canada, but here, by the spreading of rumours, generally without foundation, the civilian population has been worked

up to the pitch where it is possible that considerable trouble may be encountered. It seems to me that where we have police available throughout the province for the purpose of receiving and investigating charges against aliens and others, that there is no occasion for the spreading of these rumours at meetings and otherwise, and that it would be good policy if a measure were passed in the regulations prohibiting the spread of such rumours.

Certain statements which I have read in the press as having been made even at meetings come under the provisions of the defence of Canada regulations because they create dissatisfaction and disaffection to his majesty and are against the security of the state. The other day I read in the press words delivered by a gentleman in a great city in Canada almost advising an armed march to Ottawa. That is against the defence of Canada regulations.

Mr. COLDWELL: Is he interned?

Mr. LAPOINTE (Quebec East): No, but he deserves to be interned a good deal more than the men he wants to have interned. I believe that this work should be left to the police. They know better; they are trained. Sometimes people complain; they may have given the name of somebody. That somebody has been investigated by the men who are able to make the investigation and who work not merely on rumours.

My last advice is this. We are all working for the same cause, for the same purpose, and we ought to trust one another. Sowing distrust of those who have the responsibility and the burden is not a good thing in this country at the present time. I am not complaining. I am receiving my share of abuse. There are gentlemen and newspapers, in Montreal and Toronto, that a few months ago were having me surrounded with bouquets and flowers. I was a very big man in Canada. They have changed. I have not changed; I am exactly the same man. Either I did not deserve the flowers at the time, or I still deserve them.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): We will say it was the former.

Mr. LAPOINTE (Quebec East): I say again, let us try to trust one another and not to think there are any sinister designs in the actions of those in authority. We are doing our best. I am doing my best. Let me tell my friends and colleagues here that if I am where I am at this time, it is from a sense of duty. I do my duty, in war as well as in peace, according to the light that providence has given me, and I only ask for some indulgence on the part of those who really do not think I am as bad as some have described me.