

*Supply—Mounted Police*

young men who are fully qualified for police work would be only too willing to join the force, were it not for the fact that, having regard to the small numbers in the force, it is impossible for them to be assured of early promotion.

There is one other matter to which I would refer, before I direct my remarks to the matter which caused me to rise at this time. I have in mind those young men who served overseas, who left the mounted police in order to perform that service. To-day, when they rejoin they are denied the privilege of wearing their stars of service. I think a change should be made in that regard so that their broken service should not deny them the privilege and honour of showing the years of service they have given.

This gives me an opportunity to ask the minister for information in connection with the coupon racket revealed by the issue of a press release on June 25 in connection with La Banque Provinciale du Canada. When this matter was brought to the attention of the house on June 26 we were told that an opportunity would be given on these estimates to ascertain the situation. I do not want to go into anything that would prejudice the trial of those who have been charged, but there is one thing in connection with which the committee should be given information.

In the release to the press it was stated that the bank had been warned on several occasions about the manner in which it was handling coupons and that it had failed to carry out instructions as to changed procedure that were given. The other evening the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Finance stated that certain clerks in the employ of the bank had been arrested. I do not believe it is fair that proceedings should be taken against clerks who have given good service in all banks during the period of the war. If the head office or the officials of the bank received instructions from the wartime prices and trade board regarding illicit dealing in coupons, the committee and the country should be given some information as to what instructions were given, to whom they were given, when they were given and the extent to which the officials of the bank, not minor clerks, are responsible for what actually took place.

When the minister is explaining this, perhaps he would be willing to enlarge upon what is set out in the commissioner's report with reference to illicit coupons and the extent to which trading in illicit coupons has been carried on. I refer particularly to page

[Mr. Diefenbaker.]

29 of the report for the year ended March 31, 1945, where the following statement is made in connection with sugar coupons:

... the rationing of sugar has resulted in the appearance of a certain quantity of counterfeit sugar coupons. Shortly after the new year a "black market" operator in Montreal was found to have dispensed some 40,000 spurious coupons to the trade. It is anticipated, however, that a system of coupon audit centres now being set up by the wartime prices and trade board will result in a marked decline of offences of this type.

Has the hope expressed by the commissioner been justified by subsequent events, and to what extent are these rackets now being controlled by the activity of the mounted police and of the crime detection laboratory at Rockcliffe which was set up for the purpose of preventing a continuation of these rackets?

Mr. RICHARD (Ottawa East): I agree with all that has been said about the quality of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, but I think something should be done about their comfort. I have in mind the uniform the men on parliament hill are required to wear during these hot summer days. Although they may prove good subjects for photography, I think these men should be permitted to dress according to the weather.

Mr. CRUICKSHANK: I intend to follow the request made this afternoon by the Prime Minister and the leader of the opposition and be brief. I endorse everything said by the hon. member for Lake Centre about the admirable qualities of the mounted police and I wish all hon. members would do the same. These police constitute one of the finest tourist attractions we have in Canada.

Mr. PROBE: Do you want the police to suffer?

Mr. CRUICKSHANK: Anyone who came from your province would suffer.

Mr. PROBE: Some of my people have suffered for a long time.

Mr. CRUICKSHANK: These men have been sent over to London in their uniforms, and they have been sent to Washington, the capital of the great United States, in their uniforms. They are the greatest attraction we have. I appreciate the suffering they may have to undergo because of the weather, but perhaps they could be relieved at shorter intervals. I am strenuously opposed to changing this uniform, the most famous uniform of the Dominion of Canada. Our tourist industry is the one industry which brings in money and which takes away none of our natural resources.