

Are restrictions necessary in time of war? This is the first question, and hon. members must not forget that we are engaged in a life and death conflict. Are restrictions necessary which should not exist in ordinary times? If the answer is in the affirmative somebody has to be entrusted with the duty of applying those restrictions. If the person or authority or body entrusted with that duty does not deserve to be entrusted with it, has not the confidence of the community, then change him; put in somebody else who will command the confidence of the people. But the restrictions must remain, because they are a necessity in war time. My hon. friend says it is a terrible thing that in nine cases the Minister of Justice has declined to accept the recommendation of the committee, composed of one judge, for the release of an interned person.

Mr. COLDWELL: The principle is wrong. I am not criticizing the minister.

Mr. LAPOINTE (Quebec East): Then why give the discretion to the minister? Is he a rubber stamp?

Mr. COLDWELL: He should be bound by the recommendations.

Mr. LAPOINTE (Quebec East): That is entirely contrary to the whole principle of the matter. In a case of this kind the discretion of the Minister of Justice is a matter of public policy, not one of strict law. It should be so, and it is so everywhere else.

Perhaps it is better that I should give the four stages through which these matters go. Before a man is recommended for internment the police have gathered all the particulars concerning him, and there is a record of his activities. This is submitted to a legal man, who is counsel for the police. In the district of Montreal it is Mr. Fauteux, chief crown prosecutor, a very able legal gentleman. After he has passed on the case—and the man is at liberty while all this is being done—the matter is sent to a committee on which Mr. Robertson, now acting Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs, and Mr. MacNeill, are sitting. These men consider the facts, before they are submitted to me for an order for internment. Some precautions therefore are taken. Then if the man is a British subject he has the right of appeal, and the appeal is heard by the committee which, by the way, was selected by the parliamentary committee which sat last year as the proper authority to act in the matter. The committee sends the recommendation to the Minister of Justice. The Minister of Justice must then use his discretion. My hon. friend says he should not have that discretion. That will be for the

[Mr. E. Lapointe.]

committee to decide. I do not want even to discuss the matter too strongly; I merely point out that I disagree with my hon. friend in this respect. There are things with which the secret service of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and the Minister of Justice are acquainted which could not be given out.

My hon. friend complained that last year the committee could not get production of everything it wanted. Well, we must act on communications which come to us from foreign governments, to say nothing of those which come from our secret agents. Those communications should not be made known to the community, otherwise their work would be shattered and useless.

These things we know; and if in my own view, according to my own conscience and after consultation with those charged with keeping order in Canada at this time, I come to the conclusion that in the public interest and for the public safety of the country it is better to keep that man inside, then I will keep him inside.

My hon. friend criticized the commissioner of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police for having said in his article that at the present time the communists are those who give the police the most trouble. Well, Commissioner Wood was saying exactly what conditions are, according to his own experience. My hon. friend will understand that conditions are not the same in respect to all. Alien enemies are interned—or, if they are not interned, I may tell you that those who are not are good boys and are keeping peaceful.

On the other hand we are flooded all the time with communist circulars. In spite of the fact that many of their organizations and printing presses in Montreal have been confiscated and destroyed, they have found a way of continuing to print subversive literature of all kinds. My hon. friend has said that the communists do not like his group. I may tell him that they do not like me, either; I am usually the target of those people in their dirty literature which is being circulated in Montreal, Quebec and elsewhere. They are doing the same at other points, and they are a good deal more active than some others.

It is not a question of deciding whether fascist or nazi ideals are worse or better than communist ideals. That does not enter into the consideration of the matter. It is a fact that most of those who are making trouble at this time are the men the commissioner of the mounted police described in his article.

My hon. friend criticized the inaction of the department with respect to the article in