

the exigencies of the war the commissioner thought that the services of the force should be reserved for purely federal purposes. I think that I sent my right hon. friend (Sir Wilfrid Laurier) at the time a copy of the report of the commissioner in regard to the matter, before the negotiations were consummated.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER: Yes. I understand the matter, after the new provinces were created in 1905 the Governor in Council made arrangements with the Provincial Governments of Manitoba and Saskatchewan to continue the services of the Royal Northwest Mounted Police, \$150,000 being devoted to that purpose. The Mounted Police performed provincial as well as federal duties; they acted as constables in matters purely provincial. In view of the conditions relating to the war, however, it was advisable that the Mounted Police should be relieved from provincial duties and enabled to perform duties at the frontier incidental to guarding against the danger, I will not say of an invasion, but of a raid, or something of that kind, from the south. I think, therefore, that it was advisable, under the stress of the times, that the Mounted Police should be available purely for federal purposes.

Mr. KNOWLES: Does the member for Calgary (Mr. R. B. Bennett) know of his own knowledge that the provincial bonus was paid out without the vote of Parliament?

Mr. BENNETT: I was told that it was sent to the comptroller of the Mounted Police and by him deposited to the credit of the Mounted Police fund, and that against that fund they issued cheques without the matter being dealt with by Parliament at all. My information was the result of my making some inquiries in consequence of the termination of the agreement. I may not have the full explanation.

Mr. KNOWLES: I am not at all familiar with the rules of the Auditor General's Department, but it seems remarkable that he should authorize the payment out of such large sums of money without the authority of Parliament.

Mr. R. B. BENNETT: The Mounted Police Department handled their own cheques.

Mr. KNOWLES: It ought to have been done through the Auditor General's Department. Suppose they decided to give \$100,000 to the Liberal campaign fund?

[Sir Robert Borden.]

Mr. R. B. BENNETT: I did not think you had one.

Mr. KNOWLES: Well, to start one with? Surely the Auditor General checks these payments out.

Sir ROBERT BORDEN: Every payment must come under the supervision of the Auditor General. The question is simply this: were the amounts derived from provincial subsidies paid into the Consolidated Revenue Fund, or were they paid directly to the comptroller of the Royal Northwest Mounted Police as an amount which could be used by him, under the supervision of the Auditor General, in the maintenance of the force? I have never made inquiry into the subject, but the latter must have been the case.

Mr. KNOWLES: I do not make any suggestion that anything occurred in connection with the matter that was not perfectly sincere and bona fide. Under either Government, no department has been more readily granted money by Parliament than the Northwest Mounted Police. The Prime Minister personally has always had charge of the department, the traditions and records of which have commanded the respect and confidence of the people. I understood the Prime Minister and the leader of the Opposition to approve of the present status of the Royal Northwest Mounted Police. I regard its present status as very unfortunate and very poor business indeed. We have 800 men there.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER: Where?

Mr. KNOWLES: In the Royal Northwest Mounted Police. I am sorry to say that we have 800 idle men. Men are very scarce in Canada to-day, for fighting, for enforcing the law, for protection against crime, or for the performance of ordinary civil duties. The men of the mounted police are all able-bodied men; they are not lazy. Members of the Royal Northwest Mounted Police, officers and men, have more than once told me that for a while after this change was made they were very happy indeed, but that now they find absence of employment very irksome. Some of them fill in their time playing tennis or golf. These men formerly worked hard, and the change has been too radical to result in happiness and contentment. Besides, the men would naturally be happier if they had something to do. I cannot offer a solution of the problem, but I present it to the Prime Minister as a matter that is worthy of his consideration. At a time when we are so