

members have ever paid visits to institutions; yet it was one of the cardinal principles of magna charta that the people should take a large part in the administration of justice.

The time has come when we should have some real law reform. I have urged a consolidation of the criminal code, and that a legal committee should be set up so as to save the time of the house many days and weeks in the discussion of various legal bills. There are many other matters to which I might refer at this time, but no doubt an opportunity will be given later on.

I appreciate what the present Minister of Justice has done, and commend these suggestions to his consideration. Surely when we can waste \$60,000 to \$70,000 in the trial of one person charged with murder, we should have some new method of checking up on these motor disasters on the highways, particularly at level crossings, as well as drownings, and fires in old houses, and with respect to such other matters I have placed before the house, but the consideration of which has been delayed because of the war.

Mr. HACKETT: How many judges, whose appointments are made by the federal government, have been engaged in duties outside their statutory duties in the past year? If we could have the figures for the last three or four years, they would lend point to what I wish to say.

Right Hon. L. S. ST. LAURENT (Minister of Justice): I am not in a position to give precise information on the point, because frequently requests are made to judges by provincial authorities to engage in some activities which are not within their normal judicial duties, and concerning which no information comes to the Department of Justice. The hon. member will realize, of course, that the Minister of Justice is not an inspector of the courts of justice in the provinces.

The federal government makes the appointment of judges, pays their salaries, and presumes they are carrying on their duties in a proper manner until information is received officially to the contrary. During the period of war there have been many occasions on which it was found necessary to ask judges to perform duties which would not normally fall within their judicial activities. That seems to be inevitable. At times there are certain things which cannot be dealt with through the ordinary processes of the courts, but which must be considered by persons having judicial temperament and such detachment from ordinary business, professional or political pursuits as is required to inspire confidence in those who happen to be interested in the issues dealt with.

[Mr. Church.]

I think there are at present about fifteen judges who are doing some work that is outside the performance of their ordinary duties. Every hon. member knows that there are two from the Supreme Court of Canada who have been for a considerable time now, much longer than I thought at the outset it would require, engaged on the royal commission investigating the leakage of information from the departments of the Canadian government. There is one of the judges of the court of king's bench in Quebec who is absent in Japan as a member of the international court trying war crimes against the personnel of the allied armies. Two judges of the high court, one of Nova Scotia and one of Alberta, have been for some time investigating the coal situation. The Minister of Labour announced to the house to-day that Mr. Justice Richards of the court of appeal of Manitoba had been invited and had agreed to try to bring together the employers and the employees engaged in the operation of inland shipping. Mr. Chief Justice Sloan has just succeeded in bringing together the operators and their employees in the forest industries of British Columbia, and I may add that he seems to be particularly fitted to do that work because he had been doing for some time previously investigational work in forestry for the government of British Columbia. A judge of the high court of Nova Scotia presided for quite a long time over the national war labour board but has now returned to his judicial duties. A judge of the appeal division of the court of Alberta acted as chairman of the labour relations board but has since returned to his judicial duties.

During the administration of the selective service regulations there were—I would not venture to say how many, but several judges who were acting as chairman of the selective service boards. That was not a normal part of their functions but it was the kind of thing that seemed necessary to have done by a member of the judiciary.

I think it would be fair to say that of the total number of judges administering justice in Canada during the war period and perhaps even at the present time there would be as many as fifteen who were doing other things than their ordinary judicial work.

Mr. HACKETT: Mr. Chairman, I am not of those who believe that a rule may never suffer any exception, but I am speaking of a practice of long standing which has become peculiarly disturbing by the frequency of its recurrence, that of appointing judges to the performance of tasks outside their judicial office. In its less repugnant forms, judges have been appointed to commissions, to re-