

Supply—Justice

SUPPLY

The house in committee of supply, Mr. Rea in the chair.

ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

Headquarters administration and national police services—

362. Operation and maintenance, \$6,270,114.

Mr. Howard: Mr. Chairman, I will just wait a moment until the private discussions cease.

The Chairman: Order. I wonder whether hon. members who are leaving the chamber will do so quietly so we may hear the hon. member for Skeena, who has the floor.

Mr. Howard: The important part, Mr. Chairman, is that because of the chit-chat and noise that is going on I did not hear the comment made by an hon. member down at the other end of the chamber. Last evening I had occasion to make quite a few remarks. In order to consolidate my thoughts all at one time, perhaps I may be allowed the liberty of covering a bit of the same ground again.

I mentioned that as far as the Royal Canadian Mounted Police enforcing particular laws is concerned, sometimes in the enforcement of those laws the R.C.M.P. make quite a number of enemies and bring a bit of discredit to the force itself. This does not arise because of the actual enforcement of the law itself or the manner in which the R.C.M.P. conduct themselves during the enforcement of some particular laws, nor from the exertion of force which they might find necessary in order to maintain law and order. Sometimes they fall into disrepute because the law itself is considered to be inequitable, especially by the people who fall afoul of it.

I am not suggesting in any way, of course, that our laws should not be enforced, but I make specific reference to what I and many other people consider to be an inequitable set of laws, notably those relating to alcohol and liquor as it applies to native Indians. In speaking with members of the force in private conversations, I have asked for their opinions as to whether they think the liquor laws—and this applies to British Columbia particularly—as they apply to our Indian people are equitable or whether they could be changed. Without exception the members of the force with whom I spoke were of the opinion that there should be an alteration in the laws in so far as they apply to native Indians. They felt that they were inequitable because the liquor laws apply differently to Indians than to non-Indians.

the house leader was courteous enough to say that they would not be brought up at that time. However, since then we have been discussing the estimates of other departments during the last few weeks, and these estimates could have been considered on any one of those days.

Hon. Howard C. Green (Minister of Public Works): It is expected that these estimates and those of defence production will be brought up next week.

Mr. Winch: Did I understand that there was a statement as to when the estimates were coming up?

Mr. Green: Yes, we expect to bring the estimates of national defence and defence production before the house next week.

Mr. Winch: That would be the end of next week?

Some hon. Members: Sit down.

Mr. Winch: That would be the end of next week; the beginning or the end of the week?

Mr. Green: Under the rules we have to take legislation on Monday and Tuesday. We shall not get to the estimates until Wednesday or Thursday.

SUFFIELD, ALTA.—EXPERIMENTS IN GERM WARFARE

On the orders of the day:

Mr. H. W. Herridge (Kootenay West): Mr. Speaker, I regret once again to have to disturb the Minister of National Defence from his angle of repose but I wish to ask him a question at the request of a religious organization in Alberta. Is the Department of National Defence conducting experiments in germ warfare at Suffield, Alberta?

Hon. G. R. Pearkes (Minister of National Defence): Yes, Mr. Speaker. The department has been conducting experiments of a defensive nature at Suffield station. The objective of these experiments is to ascertain how best the spread of diseases which might be started by an enemy using biological warfare practices could be restricted.

Mr. Herridge: I have a supplementary question. Is the minister quite certain that these tests do not present any hazard to the health of people in the surrounding communities?

Mr. Pearkes: Suffield station comprises a very large area and movement is restricted in that area. I am satisfied that there is no danger of the results of these experiments affecting in any way personnel, cattle or crops in the surrounding districts.