

*Supply—Justice*

unanimous vote of this house. The civil service legislation will, I hope, shortly—and again I emphasize “I hope shortly”—be reviewed because of the desirability, indeed the necessity, of bringing in a bill to establish, among other things, collective bargaining inside the civil service, a bill which has been prepared. At that time I think it would be well for this parliament to consider not only collective bargaining in the civil service but the sections in the existing legislation, sections 50 and 60, which provide for dismissal of civil servants. This will be another occasion, and an important occasion, to discuss an important matter which has come up in the study of this particular case—the use of section 50 with regard to the dismissal of civil servants.

It is now about 20 years, Mr. Chairman, since a royal commission examined in detail a very serious wartime situation in Canada, one which threatened not only our own security but that of our allies. It was as a result of that inquiry into matters in this security field arising out of the war that most of our present security procedures were established. They have been under review since that time by successive governments and a number of changes have been made, I know, during these years in the light of changing circumstances; I have already mentioned one this afternoon.

In the intervening 20 years, peacetime years technically, so far as Canada was concerned, profound changes have taken place in international affairs, some of a very subtle nature and others quite obvious. Measures taken to deal with a situation prevalent at one time, say 20 years ago, have been shown on occasion to be inadequate or inappropriate to a later situation. Restrictive measures, such as those in the field of security, tend to have their own inertia and to prolong themselves without change after the reasons for their initial establishment may have changed.

We have been aware of this tendency, Mr. Chairman, as have no doubt governments which have preceded us, and we have attempted by continuous review of our procedures in the last three years, as well as by one very important change, to ensure that the procedures which were in operation were appropriate to the conditions of the moment. But by the very nature of the problem based on the fear of subversive action from within our own borders,—and unfortunately there is reason still for that fear—it is immensely difficult to adjust such procedures to the

subtly shifting concerns and desires of the people of this country in whose interests such procedures were established. Therefore I repeat that it is desirable that they should be subjected periodically to close examination by an outside objective authority.

Dealing as we are with a matter of national security, which transcends parliamentary and party considerations in the security sense but not in the individual freedom sense, I hope that any approach to this problem in the general field as to what we should do now, in the light of our experience over the years, in national security procedures, should be something on which we in this house would find general agreement.

Therefore, Mr. Chairman, in the light of the public concern which has been expressed, not only over a particular case but over the general situation, and in order to assist the Solicitor General in his particular and new responsibility, the government has decided to institute a judicial inquiry, but not into any particular case. This has been done already through the order in council in connection with the case before the committee. The inquiry will be into the operation of our security procedures generally, with a view to ascertaining firstly whether they are now adequate in light of present circumstances for the protection of the state against subversive action; secondly, whether they sufficiently protect the rights of private individuals in any investigations which are made under existing procedures.

I would not, Mr. Chairman, nor would this committee, desire such an inquiry to be considered in any way a reflection of the present conduct of security investigations. On the contrary, I believe that in addition to reassuring the public in this matter, it would confirm that the Royal Canadian Mounted Police act in this field with great care and great efficiency.

Having taken a decision of this kind in principle, Mr. Chairman, we now have to decide how to implement that decision most effectively by deciding on the nature and the form of such an inquiry. Announcements will be made on that score, Mr. Chairman, without delay. In working out the terms of reference of an inquiry of this kind dealing with national security and security procedures, perhaps it would be desirable for a representative of the government to consult with representatives of other parties to see whether agreement could be reached on the terms of reference to cover this wider question.