

Mr. ROSS (St. Paul's): The hon. member for Témiscouata will remember that I admitted there were certain difficulties in the way, but I must say that the hon. member seems always to put more difficulties in the way. I am trying to do something constructive when I ask the government of Canada to take action in connection with the policing of the country. We realize that we have the dominion police force, but there is no single authority which would head a police force in Canada, and it is necessary that that authority be established. I realize that there are jealousies, and I know the mounted police encounter difficulties in this connection. But there is no reason in the world why we cannot try to do something.

Mr. CHURCH: The war is putting such a heavy burden on the municipalities that the time is coming when the federal power will have to make contributions to them for police protection. Ever since confederation the enforcement of the federal statutes has been the responsibility of the provinces. That responsibility has been relegated by them to the municipalities.

I raised this matter during the last session. I do not wish to speak at length upon it now, at this late hour of the present session, because I should like to see the minister's estimates passed immediately, because I am so very glad to see him back in the chamber again. I intend to raise the matter at the next session, if I am still here. Too much responsibility is placed on the shoulders of the municipal taxpayers for many federal burdens. The dominion should make a proper contribution to the larger cities to maintain a police system sufficient to enforce federal statutes.

Mr. POULIOT: The hon. member for St. Paul's (Mr. Ross) made what he described as a constructive suggestion, when he said that the Royal Canadian Mounted Police should perform work which, in my opinion would make of them a sort of sky-scraper. He knows very well that a sky-scraper cannot be built too high. I point out to him that that is the danger of the suggestion he has made. Moreover, I have no lesson to receive from him, or from any other hon. member in the chamber, except, of course, from the chair.

Mr. GREEN: I suggest to the minister that the counteracting of fifth column activities should be exclusively in the hands of the mounted police. I point out, further, that it is quite obvious that they have not enough men to do that work in the three provinces of Ontario, Quebec and British Columbia. Would it not be possible for the dominion government to pay a certain subsidy or a certain fee to the governments of those three

provinces, so that a certain proportion of their provincial police forces might help out with the work against the activities of the fifth column. Those officers would be under the direction of the mounted police.

Mr. LAPOINTE (Quebec East): They are doing that, with their own money, at the present time.

Mr. GREEN: But not in the same way.

Mr. LAPOINTE (Quebec East): I do not know whether it would be fair to ask this parliament to supply funds for provincial policing activities. However, as I said, cooperation must be the best possible among the two or three powers involved.

There is no doubt that there would be much to commend the suggestion regarding central authority, so far as police activities are concerned. But one of the difficulties in our constitution, as has been pointed out by the hon. member for Témiscouata, is that the provinces are jealous of their powers and their autonomy. However, this is a matter which might be studied and considered by a federal-provincial conference, so that some understanding might be reached. The commissioner informs me that in Great Britain the central authority keeps a sort of inspection on various local police forces, and contributes a certain amount toward their work. I do not know whether that could be done in Canada, but certainly it cannot be done without the consent and the cooperation of the provinces, and possibly the large municipalities. It might be considered that they should come into the scheme.

Mr. GREEN: At the moment these home guard units in the provinces are not under dominion control of any kind, either by the mounted police or by the department of national defence; is that correct?

Mr. LAPOINTE (Quebec East): I thought the Department of National Defence had something to do with them; I know I have not.

Mr. ROSS (St. Paul's): I have mentioned before in the house the matter of the protection of the hydro-electric plants in Ontario. This is no longer a provincial matter. Rather, I suggest it is one of national importance, and there should be no question of controversy as between the provinces and the dominion as to who must pay for the protection of those plants. They are of national importance, and therefore I suggest it is the responsibility of the dominion government to provide proper protection. If guards were provided by the dominion government, much of the controversy between the provinces and the dominion would