

*Supply—Justice*

Newfoundland. I hope the minister is not going to allow these slurs upon a splendid force to pass without any reference from him.

**Mr. Batten:** Mr. Chairman, I do not want to make any extended remarks on this topic at this time, but I do want to make some comments with regard to the failure of the government to send the Royal Canadian Mounted Police reinforcements to Newfoundland when they were requested and when they were required. In the few comments I have to make I shall follow the members from Newfoundland who spoke yesterday and I shall not, of course, discuss any of the contractual obligations, neither shall I go into a discussion of the situation which brought about the need for reinforcement of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

I would, at the beginning, like to comment on the remarks made yesterday by the hon. member for Timiskaming. The hon. member made reference to the fact that some of the R.C.M.P. in Newfoundland at that time may well have been, in years gone by, members of the old Newfoundland ranger force. Those who know anything about this force will remember that it was brought into being at the time when Newfoundland was under commission government. I am not now in a position to say how well these men were trained, but they were trained and during the time they were operating in Newfoundland they did a very effective job. After 1949 a number of the members of the Newfoundland ranger force were taken into the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, as were a number of members of the Newfoundland constabulary.

Well, that happened 10 years ago, and during that 10 years these men have had considerable training given to them; and with the training they were able to bring into the force they are now very creditable members of the R.C.M.P. I know a lot of them personally. I knew them when they were members of the Newfoundland ranger force, and I know them now. Even if some of these former rangers were amongst the group of R.C.M.P. at Badger—I am not saying they were—I am very sure that their presence had no effect in reducing the efficiency or effectiveness of the R.C.M.P. Again, if there were two or three of them there they did not directly reduce the effect of the collective body.

I take exception to the remarks made by the hon. gentleman, because I feel that those men who were brought into the R.C.M.P. are now well trained, and those who have been given promotion were certainly given promotion on the same strict standards as

[Mr. Pickersgill.]

any other member of the R.C.M.P. I feel that they are able to give the force as efficient service as the men from any other province who have been promoted. Whatever the actions of the R.C.M.P. in Newfoundland, I certainly think there can be no reflection on their efficiency because of the fact that included amongst their numbers there may have been members of the Newfoundland ranger force or the Newfoundland constabulary. This is a reflection that I could not accept.

The hon. gentleman went on to refer to the attorney general of Newfoundland. It is true that some time ago he was a director of Bowater's Newfoundland Pulp and Paper Mills Limited, but only under an elective position. When the government's interest in this company had been changed he was no longer there officially to advise. If he had to make recommendations to the Attorney General of Canada he was making them through or on the recommendation of the inspector of the R.C.M.P.

In all, Mr. Chairman, I feel the effectiveness of the R.C.M.P. in Newfoundland in this particular situation is something that is not deserving of the slurs and the most uncomplimentary remarks that have been made concerning it. Certainly there was a very difficult situation at that time. An extremely tense situation existed, not only between the parties to the dispute but also amongst the general populace. There was a need to preserve the peace, not only between the two parties concerned but also amongst the people in general. There was a need to protect life and property, and there was a need to protect the general public.

There is little need to give an account of how the people felt about this. I am sure many hon. members in the house have received letters from the various parts of this country, and I am sure that many have seen the newspaper reports. It is a fact that the people of Newfoundland did expect the R.C.M.P. reinforcements to come at this particular time because they were needed. They were needed to preserve law and order and to protect those who required protection. The claim that the R.C.M.P. acted in Newfoundland as strikebreakers is one that is completely invalid.

I can understand that there are people who would feel that the R.C.M.P. were carrying out their regular duties, not only in instructing people in what the law was but also, unfortunately, in having to enforce the law. There may be others who were of the opinion that they were strikebreakers, but I think it would be very difficult to sustain that position so far as the R.C.M.P. are concerned. I feel