

myself, but his own leader, who, as I say, for fifteen years had charge of the force, and who was very intimately acquainted with the duties that it was called upon to perform. My hon. friend is mistaken in some respects. We had a formal notice from the Government of one of the provinces—the province of Alberta—that they did not purpose to continue this agreement. They gave us notice some months before the occasion on which the agreement was last renewed that they proposed to establish their own police force, and that they would not continue the agreement. It is perfectly true that after that they did reconsider the matter, and, following the example of Saskatchewan, they did enter into a further agreement for a limited term. But it was perfectly evident that in both the provinces of Saskatchewan and Alberta there was an intention of creating a provincial police force and declining to continue further the arrangement which had been made between these provinces and the Federal Government for certain subsidies for the maintenance of the force. It is also perfectly true that from one of these provinces at least the commissioner received notice that the force were expected to undertake the enforcement of the enactments respecting the use of spirituous liquor. My hon. friend is not accurate when he says that no such proposal was ever made. The proposal was made and made in writing. I remember perfectly well having seen it. The demand was communicated in writing to the Commissioner of the Northwest Mounted Police.

Mr. OLIVER: That they should enforce the Liquor Act?

Sir ROBERT BORDEN: That they should undertake the enforcement of the Liquor Act. The commissioner had that in mind in connection with the other considerations to which I have alluded. In his opinion it was desirable and necessary that the services of the force should be reserved for purely Federal purposes under the conditions which obtained and which still continue.

Mr. OLIVER: In regard to this danger which is supposed to have existed, the Prime Minister says that he has the authority of the commissioner of the police to say that there was such a dangerous condition as to call for the withdrawal of the mounted police from the performance of police duties. I would have to characterize the suggestion of the commissioner, with more or less re-

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spect, as being absurd, from the fact that from the outbreak of the war in 1914 until the present time, or quite recently, there have been thousands of men under arms in the Northwest Territories continuously, and whether there were a thousand mounted policemen doing police duties or not, doing police duties did not make any difference in the absolute power of the military forces of the West to resist any aggression from any source from which it might come.

Sir ROBERT BORDEN: I can tell my hon. friend that his suggestion in that regard is not at all new. All these suggestions had careful consideration. A proposition that one battalion should be assigned from time to time to patrol work while in course of training was taken up but it was declared by the military authorities who were consulted to be absolutely impracticable for reasons which I could very well state if it were necessary to do so.

Mr. KNOWLES: Would the minister be good enough to communicate to the House any information which he receives from Commissioner Perry, or any other official, as to whether it is not possible to make some profitable use of the energies of the police force in some other direction?

Sir ROBERT BORDEN: I shall be very glad to communicate any such information as I receive it.

Mr. OLIVER: I would like to ask if the right hon. gentleman has the correspondence between the Provincial Governments and the Dominion Government with regard to the withdrawal of the police force and replacing it with the civil force?

Sir ROBERT BORDEN: I cannot recall that there is any correspondence. The negotiations were carried on by the commissioner himself with the Governments of Alberta and Saskatchewan and, I think also, with the Government of Manitoba although I am not absolutely sure as to that.

Mr. OLIVER: At what date would that agreement have expired?

Sir ROBERT BORDEN: I should think, in two or three years.

Mr. OLIVER: It would not have terminated within a very short period?

Sir ROBERT BORDEN: No, it had a substantial period to run.

Mr. OLIVER: In fact it had only recently been made.