

Inquiries of the Ministry

ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

REFERENCE TO FILM "SASKATCHEWAN"

On the orders of the day:

Mr. G. R. Pearkes (Esquimalt-Saanich): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege and I bring this matter to your attention because I feel an answer is called for from the ministry. I have already spoken to the appropriate minister about this matter. Last night I attended a film entitled "Saskatchewan", which is represented as being based upon historical facts. The story, besides being full of historical and geographical inaccuracies, is an insult to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, a force in which I once served and of which all Canadians are justly proud. This film is also an affront to the memory of certain great Canadians who, by their tact and good judgment, averted Indian warfare in western Canada. The whole sickly story is a travesty of the true facts and therefore its showing is highly undesirable because it distorts, for young Canadians, a glorious chapter in Canadian history.

At no time in the long record of the mounted police did troops of that force engage Indians in murderous battle, killing large numbers of natives, nor did mutiny or insubordination exist in that force. On the contrary, the relationship between officers, non-commissioned officers and constables has always been excellent. I therefore wish to ask the Minister of Justice if any public funds were expended in the production of this atrocious film.

Hon. Stuart S. Garson (Minister of Justice): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member will be greatly relieved to learn that no public funds were expended in the production of that film. That is as one would expect, because we of course do not subsidize these Hollywood productions. I have not seen the film myself but I have received information from the commissioner which indicates that the remarks made by the hon. member for Esquimalt-Saanich (Mr. Pearkes) are correct. The film is quite inaccurate historically and as regards the location in which it was produced; and, as the hon. member has stated, what is even more important is that it does very much less than justice to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, whose great prestige has always been peculiarly based upon its long and honourable record of having enforced law and order, not by gun-play, as indicated in this film, but with the minimum use of force.

Mr. Speaker: Perhaps I should say for the purpose of the record that I should have

Hon. Stuart S. Garson (Minister of Justice): Mr. Speaker, in my radio address last night I suggested that a great authority in the United Kingdom, Lord Beveridge, said that 3 per cent unemployment was proper, that it was equivalent to full employment in Great Britain and the Trades and Labour Congress and the Canadian Congress of Labour had indicated that anywhere from 3 to 5 per cent might be a corresponding percentage for Canada. I agreed, by implication, with both these labour congresses.

Mr. Angus MacInnis (Vancouver-Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask a supplementary question. When the minister says 3 per cent might be the proper amount of unemployment, what does he mean by "proper"?

Mr. Garson: In relation to the context to which the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) alluded, Lord Beveridge's statement was that that would be the degree of unemployment in Great Britain which would indicate full employment and that there was not a shortage of labour.

[Later:]

INQUIRY AS TO FIGURES RELEASED
BY DEPARTMENT OF LABOUR

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Clarence Gillis (Cape Breton South): Might I be permitted to direct a question to the Minister of Labour, arising out of the answer given by the Minister of Justice a few minutes ago and which could be misunderstood. Is it correct that the last figures released by the minister's department indicate that approximately 10 per cent of the working force of Canada are at present unemployed?

Hon. Milton F. Gregg (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, the normal monthly release which was published yesterday indicated, as explained during the debate, the two sets of figures related to unemployment. One set consisted of those prepared by the dominion bureau of statistics showing those without jobs at a given time; the other set of figures showed the total of those at a given date listed in the national employment service offices across Canada as applying for employment. As I recall it, during the debate the announcement was made that the dominion bureau of statistics figure was 280,000 in round figures and that the other group of figures totalled 524,000 for January. The corresponding figures issued yesterday for February were 312,000 in the first instance and 559,000 in the second.