

Supply—Justice

resignation. The minister did not need to have had this resignation. If the minister had done his plain duty there would have been no resignation for the commissioner.

Now the minister said something about the decision of the government. There was no decision for the government to make in this matter. There was a decision for the Attorney General of Canada.

Mr. Fulton: Which he made.

Mr. Pickersgill: But the minister said just now, if he will look at his *Hansard*—he referred to a decision of the government.

Mr. Fulton: I do not think so.

Mr. Pickersgill: The record will show it. I hope he leaves it there so that it does show it.

Mr. Fulton: I have made it perfectly clear that the decision was mine.

Mr. Pickersgill: The minister will find, when he reads the record, that he frequently referred to a decision of the government.

Mr. Fulton: I have said, and I repeat, that the decision was mine and that I accept the responsibility for it and have never, in spite of the urgings of the hon. gentleman, tried to avoid that responsibility. With regard to this suggestion that there has never been a request for reinforcements earlier than the Badger incident, the hon. gentleman has shown that he is so blinded by the heat of his own passion as not to have appreciated what the record shows, because this has been on the record since March 16, that there were two occasions when I received a request for reinforcements. If the hon. gentleman can contain his passion and read the record accurately as it appears at page 1959, he will see that I said on March 16—it is too bad the hon. gentleman has not attempted to establish all the facts, because this apparently comes as news to him. I said the following:

The facts leading up to this resignation can be summarized as follows. On Sunday, March 8, I received a wire from the attorney general of Newfoundland asking for 50 additional Royal Canadian Mounted Police reinforcements and citing the terms of the contract.

As a result of these consultations, however, it was agreed that the situation might be kept under control by the sending of some 25 members of the Newfoundland constabulary from the city of St. John's into the strike area. This was done, and a further 20 Royal Canadian Mounted Police from other points in the divisional area were also brought into the strike area and, on this basis, it was reported that control of the situation might be maintained. However, arrangements were made by the commissioner, with my approval, to alert the Royal Canadian Mounted Police in the other maritime provinces so that if the situation should require it and authority should be forthcoming, reinforcements could be sent in from the outside with a minimum of delay. This information was

[Mr. Pickersgill.]

accordingly conveyed by the commissioner to Superintendent Parsons and by him to the attorney general of Newfoundland.

Following the clash—

Mr. Pickersgill: The minister does not need to read any more.

Mr. Fulton: I continue:

—that took place on the highway outside the town of Badger on Tuesday evening, March 10, the situation apparently deteriorated further and Superintendent Parsons advised the commissioner that in view of the movement of 100 further strikers into the area he felt that the call for reinforcements should be renewed.

I received further communication accordingly requesting me to authorize the sending of 50 further R.C.M. Police. I put that on the record, Mr. Chairman, to make it clear that this was not the first occasion on which we had been asked to send reinforcements, and that our earlier consultations had also had the effect of making it clear to the province of Newfoundland that we were, to say the least, most reluctant to authorize the sending of reinforcements to this area, notwithstanding the fact we realized that the men there must be left free to carry out their responsibilities under the contract.

Mr. Pickersgill: Mr. Chairman, this is the most extraordinary casuistry that I have ever listened to in my life. This was all the same request.

Mr. Fulton: No.

Mr. Pickersgill: It was so palpably the same request, and what is more the attorney general was obviously satisfied with the interim arrangements that were made. It seems to me that all it does is to reinforce and reinforce very strongly my argument in the matter. In the first place the government of Newfoundland, right up until the minister's statement on March 11 of this year, had every reason to believe that if an emergency arose these men would be available, and the fact that it went back to as early as the minister has pointed out in the record, and that the men were assembled. What were they assembled for? Were they assembled for the purpose of being sent once disorders were all over and there was complete peace there? Or were they assembled to be sent in case a greater emergency arose? It seems to me that if ever anyone made his case weaker the minister has done it by his own intervention.

Mr. Carter: Mr. Chairman, as my colleague from Bonavista-Twillingate has pointed out, in the course of discharging their duties in connection with the unfortunate labour troubles in Newfoundland last March, serious accusations were made against the R.C.M. Police which called into question their integrity. It is regrettable that to date no