

Supply—Justice

refusing to send extra reinforcements. It is true, Mr. Chairman, that there was no further outbreak of violence, but it is not true that this happy outcome is due to the fact that the Royal Canadian Mounted Police in central Newfoundland were not reinforced, because they were. Members of the Newfoundland constabulary were dispatched to the scene of violence, and further help was volunteered by war veterans. The situation was such that this had to be done, and as a result St. John's was left almost entirely without police protection.

Telegrams were sent by the premier of Newfoundland and requests were made by the attorney general of Newfoundland and by other prominent Newfoundlanders. And because much needed help was not sent, Commissioner L. H. Nicholson submitted his resignation. He has, as I am sure we will all agree, helped to place our federal police on a level second to none in the world.

The hon. member for Bonavista-Twillingate has been continually criticized for statements he has made regarding the situation, but Newfoundlanders and people all over Canada have expressed their desire to back fully many of the remarks he has made. This has been proven through the medium of the press, radio and television. I hate to think, Mr. Chairman, what might have happened had this outbreak gained momentum.

There is no doubt in the minds of millions of Canadians but that reinforcements should have been sent to Newfoundland. Because they were not sent the present government broke faith with the province of Newfoundland. I suggest that doubts have been created in the minds of many of our people as to the efficiency of the present justice department because even now, months after the crisis, Canadians are still questioning the action and final decision taken by the Minister of Justice.

The reference made by my friend the hon. member for Timiskaming yesterday to police policy and personnel in Newfoundland is entirely incorrect. We have now, and always have had, as good police personnel as could be or can be found in any other province in the Dominion of Canada. As Newfoundlanders we have been entirely satisfied with the manner in which they have performed their duties as rangers, as provincial police or as members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, Newfoundland is proudly represented in all branches of our federal police, many of whom served as rangers and as provincial police in my riding.

Mr. Pickersgill: Mr. Chairman, I want to speak very briefly partly to draw attention to the fact that yesterday the minister tabled a telegram from the mayor of St. John's, which was read by my hon. friend from Trinity-Conception, but there is no evidence that the minister tabled the reply. It would appear to me from having heard it read that that telegram was and can only be construed as a protest against the failure of the government to send the reinforcements, and therefore should properly have been included in the order that was tabled.

I am not making any particular point of that, but I think we should be told before the item is passed what the minister said in reply to the mayor. I am not going to make anything of the point of order, but I would ask him to put it on the record.

While I am on my feet I should like to draw attention to the fact brought out by the hon. member for Trinity-Conception that the net effect of what the government did—I say what the government did in refusing to reinforce the mounted police—was to deprive the city of St. John's of a police force for a very critical period because the Newfoundland constabulary had to be sent in place of the reinforcements which were denied. So far as that area was concerned it made much less difference than it would to an area that was not affected at all, but was deprived of police protection by the action of the government.

I should like also to put on the record the fact that whatever his present views may be, the mayor of St. John's is very well known to hon. gentlemen opposite and was not only a strong supporter of their party but at one time was provincial leader of their party. It seems to me that is not without significance in indicating what the feeling was in Newfoundland generally about this action.

There is one other question I should like to put to the minister. The hon. member for Trinity-Conception has reminded us of the references which were made by the hon. member for Timiskaming to the Newfoundland constabulary. The Newfoundland constabulary, as the minister knows, were serving under the command of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. I do hope the minister is not going to ignore these slurs upon a police force which he told us by arrangement, as he suggested when the subject of reinforcements first came up, were sent to central