

Mr. GREEN: I wonder if the minister could explain the situation with regard to checking up on fifth column activities in the various provinces. I believe three provinces, Ontario, Quebec and British Columbia, have their own provincial police forces. In those provinces, of course, there is not so large a proportion of mounted police as in the other provinces. I believe there is some question as to whether or not there are sufficient mounted policemen in those three provinces to check up properly on these activities. Would it not be possible for the dominion government to make some arrangement with the police forces of those three provinces in order to help out with this work of checking subversive activities? I suppose it will resolve itself into the question of who is to pay the cost of having this work done. It seems to me that this could quite properly be paid for by the dominion. As the situation exists to-day, I do not believe the mounted police are in a position to do all the work that should be done in those three provinces. This is a matter where action should be taken by the government without delay.

Mr. CARDIN: The mounted police operate all over Canada under the defence of Canada regulations. It may be that in certain provinces we have not as many mounted police officers as in others, but I am informed that the cooperation which exists between the mounted police and the provincial police authorities is satisfactory.

Mr. GREEN: It is quite true that there is cooperation, but these inquiries have to be made by someone qualified to go into the facts, and I believe all reports must go through the mounted police; in other words, the reports do not come direct from the provincial police to the mounted police headquarters at Ottawa. Some arrangement should be made to use the provincial police of those three provinces to a far greater degree than they are used at the present time in checking these subversive activities.

Mr. CARDIN: As I said, the local police are cooperating with the mounted police, but they do not necessarily report through the mounted police. As my hon. friend knows, when the local police discover that something is going on, they have the right to take action through the attorney general of the province.

Mr. GREEN: I realize that the minister is handicapped because he is only acting Minister of Justice, but the fact is that if these people carrying on subversive activities are to be detained, action must be taken by the mounted police, if they are enemy aliens,

or by the Minister of Justice, if they are not enemy aliens. The provincial police have no power to intern, so the minister is quite wrong in the statement he just made that the local police can act through the provincial authorities.

Mr. CARDIN: My information is that in cases of that kind, they proceed by giving information to the mounted police. The local police may obtain certain information, which would be passed on to the mounted police for federal action.

Mr. GREEN: If the minister will look into this situation a little further I think he will find that something should be done. There was reported in the British Columbia press a complaint of the attorney general of the province, who, after all, belongs to a government which is friendly to this government. I think the situation should be checked up by the minister.

Mr. CARDIN: I will do that.

Section agreed to.

On section 2—Exceptions as to age of new personnel.

Mr. STIRLING: Does not the underlined phrase at the end of this section grant rather wide power to the minister?

Mr. CARDIN: I admit it is pretty wide, but it was thought necessary to include it.

Mr. STIRLING: Is the minister in a position to give the reason why that wide wording was selected?

Mr. CARDIN: Frankly, I cannot. The bill was prepared before I was placed in charge of the department. There was a strong recommendation from the commissioner of the mounted police that such power would be necessary.

Mr. GREEN: Very early in the session the Minister of Justice (Mr. Lapointe) stated that the mounted police force was to be increased. Can the minister give us any information in that regard?

Mr. CARDIN: The force has been increased by about 1,500 men.

Mr. GREEN: In what time?

Mr. CARDIN: Since the war began.

Mr. GREEN: What is the total strength now?

Mr. CARDIN: The regular force was 2,500 men, and it has been increased by 1,500.

Mr. GREEN: Is the total strength now 4,000?

Mr. CARDIN: Yes.