

furnished to me, and I believe to other members of the house, by Mr. Charles Delbridge, who was police commissioner of that city for the year 1932. Of the 411 holdups 324 were carried out with arms, and there were 23 attempted armed holdups. There we have over eighty per cent of the total holdups in Vancouver during that period carried out with the use of arms. Then there were twenty cases in which it was doubtful whether or not arms were used; the attempt was made to convince the victim that the holdup man was armed.

I think this all goes to prove the necessity for some legislation such as we have before us to-day. Perhaps in Vancouver our population is a little more cosmopolitan than it is in some other centres, but certainly there we have been victims of the holdup artists.

Mr. MARCIL: The same thing applies to Montreal.

Mr. HANBURY: The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre inquired from the minister whether this legislation was advocated and supported by police boards in various parts of Canada. I should say that perhaps it is, but in addition to that, it is being supported by members of the council and, on my part, by one member of this House of Commons, and I think it is legislation that we should have. The city council of Vancouver has on several occasions advocated legislation along this line and, like the hon. member for New Westminster, I do not think we can make the law in this regard too drastic. The minister is suggesting an amendment whereby he is going to fix the gaol term from one to five years. It is conceivable that a man might inadvertently be carrying a weapon with him and in that case perhaps it might work an injustice to put him in gaol for a period of five years. On the other hand, the man who is carrying an offensive weapon should show good cause for having it in his possession, and if he has it for offensive purposes, against the peace of the people of this country, I do not think five years is too long. Indeed, if I had my way, I would put him in gaol for the rest of his life. The man who goes around with an offensive weapon is a potential murderer; I do not look upon him in any other way. I hope the minister will keep this legislation as drastic as possible.

Mr. LAPOINTE: I agree with the provisions of this bill, and more particularly with the provision that the attorney general of the province should have the right to issue permits either to the police or to other persons carrying offensive weapons.

[Mr. Hanbury.]

Mr. MITCHELL: In my opinion there is absolutely no reason why any civilian should carry arms. I have never owned a weapon in my life and I do not believe there is any reason for anyone to own firearms. The man who carries around a firearm is a moral coward. My hon. friend from one of the British Columbia constituencies spoke of people who might carry arms inadvertently. It seems to me that if we leave that loophole in the legislation to take care of such cases everyone who is arrested under this law will endeavour to get from under by invoking that amendment. What I want to point out in connection with the Montreal case however is that this man had no opportunity to defend himself. It cannot be said that he carried arms. He was absolutely unarmed and was shot in the back.

Mr. JEAN: That is not correct.

Mr. MITCHELL: It is.

Mr. JEAN: No. The case was heard before Magistrate Cusson who heard twenty witnesses and offered to hear as many more as might come forward, and he absolutely justified Constable Zappa in the action he had taken.

Mr. MITCHELL: This man was unarmed.

Mr. BELL (St. Antoine): He had picked up an iron bar.

Mr. MITCHELL: I still maintain that he was unarmed. I absolutely agree with the contention that it is unnecessary for the police force of the country to walk around armed like soldiers in the midst of a war. It may be necessary under certain circumstances for them to carry arms, and I am not one of those who would suggest that the police force should not sometimes be armed. I should like to know however what proportion of the men who took part in holdups in Vancouver district were natives of this country.

Mr. HANBURY: That does not alter the position.

Mr. MITCHELL: The responsibility rests with the police forces of the country to see to it that there is no unnecessary display of arms on their part. Any such display is in my opinion utterly wrong. I do not think it is a good thing to display arms to boys who, particularly at this time, have very little to do. In my opinion this legislation should if possible have some stipulations along that line.

Mr. BELL (St. Antoine): The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre and the hon. member for East Hamilton have not stated correctly the facts in connection with this