

Supply—Justice

More R.C.M.P. men should be assigned to patrol work there, or greater authority given the local police. I know that, in Beloeil itself, one constable is prepared to offer his services and ensure the enforcement of the law on week ends. Incidentally, I invite hon. members who are interested in regattas, as well as the Minister of Justice, to come out to Chambly next Sunday. They can then see for themselves that as a result of the heavy traffic of pleasure boats on the Richelieu, between Beloeil and Chambly, there will probably be a number of slight accidents or even serious ones, as there were on the occasion of previous regattas.

Mr. Chairman, would it not be advisable to consider the possibility of increasing first of all the number of R.C.M.P. agents doing that type of work?

I believe that, in Montreal, there are only two constables and one corporal to patrol the whole Montreal area on the St. Lawrence and on the Richelieu. In my opinion, this is utterly inadequate. In the first place the only job those men are able to do efficiently is checking up. They are doing the job now and I have only congratulations to offer to the agents of the Montreal division office. However, as I said a moment ago, they cannot do any more than check up. They call at boating clubs, check boats, warn people who do not comply with the regulations and advise them on water safety.

That is about all the work they can handle, and when regattas are held anywhere, those men, who are busy supervising boat traffic here and there along the St. Lawrence and the Richelieu, cannot attend. They can't be everywhere at once and therefore can't supervise all areas and lodge complaints against people who break the regulations.

I therefore urge the minister to consider the possibility of increasing the number of R.C.M.P. constables assigned to that type of work. Obviously, my request brings up another problem, that of additional expense. When municipal and provincial police are asked to supervise traffic on those waterways, it means increasing the personnel, and we know that if the provincial government should establish a division of the provincial police to supervise navigation, and if municipal governments should do likewise, it would lead to additional expenditure which it would be rather difficult to require from the province and especially from smaller towns like Beloeil and Chambly.

I therefore urge the government, and particularly the hon. Minister of Justice, to consider the problem in that light.

Mr. Chairman, may I also take this opportunity to do my small bit to arouse public opinion with regard to water safety. All kinds of campaigns are organized every week end for the prevention of highway accidents. We profess to be shocked by traffic congestion on week ends; solemn statements are made, and this or that highway is described as a "death trap", etc., etc. Violators of traffic regulations are roundly tongue lashed; in short, attention is paid to highway safety. However, I feel that in the summer season too little attention is paid to the problem of insuring safety on the waterways. Why could the R.C.M.P. not sponsor, organize or support a public education campaign on water safety?

I have here a pamphlet issued by the Department of Transport information division, under the title "Safety afloat for owners of small boats", which deals with this problem. I wonder just how many people who own some kind of boat are aware of the existence of this pamphlet, or have some slight knowledge of regulations governing the operation of watercraft.

I therefore urge officials of the Department of Transport or Justice to organize, sponsor or support—through the R.C.M.P.—a large scale campaign that might be designated "Water safety campaign".

Mr. Chairman, I have one more problem to refer to. It is the matter of joint jurisdiction with regard to pleasure boating and commercial shipping. There should be closer supervision over barges and other commercial craft on such rivers as the Richelieu, where pleasure boats account for most of the traffic. It is a question of safety for the lives of Canadian citizens.

On behalf of all boating clubs in my area, I submit this request to the Minister of Justice.

(Text):

Mr. Tucker: Mr. Chairman, only time will tell why the federal government withheld permission to send Royal Canadian Mounted Police reinforcements to Newfoundland when the province was facing a great crisis. It cannot be denied that it is the government's first duty to preserve peace and order in every province where the mounted police act as the provincial police, and Newfound-