

ACTION ADVOCATED TO STAMP OUT SEDITION

Hon. Hugh Guthrie Tells House Agents of Crime and Revolt in Canada.

Canadian Press Despatch.

Ottawa, June 11.—Hon. Hugh Guthrie, Solicitor-General, was emphatic in the House of Commons yesterday afternoon in the statement that the report of the committee on **sedition** was neither inspired by nor a result of the Winnipeg strike. "I mentioned this matter," he said, "on account of an article I saw in the press to the effect that the special committee appointed in regard to **sedition** had brought down a report as a direct result of the strike which exists in Winnipeg, and that the report might operate adversely upon many labor organizations in Canada. This statement is thoroughly erroneous. The report can have no such operation and no such effect. It is true that the committee did look over the whole situation in Canada and it is quite true that the committee did recognize what I think must be recognized by every citizen of Canada at the present time, that not only in Canada but in other countries, we are to a very large extent confronted with a new situation and it will be necessary, now and in the future, to amend our law both civil and criminal as the case may require in order to meet the situation."

Dangerous Propaganda.

In Canada to-day there existed many associations organized for the purpose of dangerous propaganda, which, if permitted to pursue their might ultimately prove a serious menace to the authority of the Government. Fortunately up to the present time Canada had not suffered to any marked extent from uprising which might be directly attributed to these associations.

"In this respect," Mr. Guthrie went on, "I think we have perhaps been more fortunate than our neighbors in the United States, but we must not permit ourselves to be allowed to rest in any state of fancied security.

"One is bound to realize that the growth is continuous, and the activities are becoming more pronounced almost from day to day. So the time has come when there is something necessary in the way of positive action by this Parliament, to the end, in the first instance, that this pernicious propaganda may be stopped in this country, and at the same time the greater care will have to be exercised that there is no curtailment of free speech, or free printing, or free political thought, statement or action."

Orders-in-Council Rescinded.

The Canadian people, said Mr. Guthrie, found themselves in this position to-day. The orders-in-Council with regard to **sedition**, which were in force during the war, had been rescinded. The provisions of the Criminal Code with regard to sedition, however, were still in force. He believed that the time had come to put some of the provisions which were embodied in the war time orders-in-Council into statutory form. The report of the committee recommended no very great changes in the criminal code. The first recommendation was in regard to unlawful associations, and Mr. Guthrie stated that there was no provision in the Criminal Code to deal with such organizations. There was a provision regarding unlawful assemblies. The report of the committee contained the proposal to make unlawful any society, one of the purposes of which was to bring about governmental, industrial or economic changes, by the use of force. The members of such societies would be liable to penalties, and the goods and belonging of such associations would be forfeited.

The committee, said Mr. Guthrie, recommended a change in the penalty clause of the Criminal Code, with regard to **sedition**. Formerly this section provided for a penalty of two years' imprisonment. The committee recommended that this be changed from one to twenty years.