

# QUESTIONS IN HOUSE ON RIOT IN WINNIPEG

**Hon H. W. Rowell Reviews Correspondence Regarding Part Played By R.N.W.M.P.**

## **MOB FIRED FIRST**

**Repeats That Mounted Police Only Fired In Self Defence**

OTTAWA, June 23.—Hon. N. W. Rowell, in reply to a question by D. D. McKenzie, made a statement in the house this morning in regard to the rioting at Winnipeg. He first reviewed correspondence which had passed between him and the attorney-general of Manitoba in regard to the co-operation of North-West Mounted Police with the provincial authorities in the preservation of law and order. Relating what had happened within the last few days at Winnipeg, Mr. Rowell told of the efforts of Mayor Gray to prevent the parade of Saturday and the meeting of Hon. G. D. Robertson with the strike committee who insisted that the parade should go on unless the strike was settled at 2.30, that the street cars which were already operating, must cease their operations and they would go temporarily to the industrial bureau, of which they would take possession. They desired also to be addressed in the industrial bureau. Mr. Robertson agreed to address them.

### **The Events of Saturday**

Dealing with the events of Saturday Mr. Rowell said: "The Mayor, with the approval of the attorney-general and his presence, went to the headquarters of the North-West Mounted Police and asked for their co-operation in preserving law and order. It was the joint request of the mayor, representing the municipal authority and the attorney-general, representing the provincial government. The mounted police moved down Main street, endeavoring to disperse the crowd. There was evidence of violence almost at once. So much so that the mayor read the Riot Act and then proceeded to the militia headquarters and asked that the militia be called out.

### **Threats of Violence**

"There were threats of violence, a street car was seriously broken up, stones and other missiles were thrown at the mounted police. There were some casualties as a result of that throwing and the condition was such that the officer in command of the police felt it absolutely necessary—

should say in addition that shots had been fired—as a matter of self-defence that the police should fire. This they did with the result that there were a number of casualties among those in the mob. There was a total of 33 casualties all told, of which 16 are in the mounted police. That would make 17 casualties in the mob. All the police are out of the hospital with the exception of one who has been more seriously injured than the others and is still in the hospital. Of the men in the crowd who were injured in the riot one was killed one or two others probably seriously injured. As to the condition of the others I have no specific information. I should add that the militia immediately came to the assistance of the mounted police and the mob was dispersed in the course of half an hour or a little more. "Since that time the city has been comparatively quiet. There has been no trouble since the dispersal of the mob.

#### **First Shots Fired by Mob**

"Let me repeat that the first shots were fired by the mob and the mounted police only fired in self-defence. The information we have is that the police acted with great coolness, great courage and great patience as would be characteristic of men in the R.N. W.M.P. That is true of the police. It is equally true of the militia, as a matter of fact, the majority of the police were returned men and a large number of the militia were returned men.

#### **Order Must Be Maintained**

"Every one must regret that life has been lost on this occasion. Every one must regret the serious casualties which have been sustained. But I am sure that the members of the house will agree, that sane and thinking people of the country must

agree, that law and order in Canada must be maintained and the sooner all classes recognize that it is the intention of the federal, provincial and municipal governments in Canada to maintain law and order to protect life and property, the more speedily shall we reach a good understanding respecting all matters of public interest.

Mr. Cahill asked as to the truth of the statement in the press that the rioters were led by returned soldiers.

### **Few Returned Men**

Mr. Rowell repeated his statement that the men who first waited upon the minister of labor included a number of returned soldiers but he emphasized the point that returned men who took part in the trouble constitute but a small percentage of the returned men. The great majority of the soldiers, he said, were out of sympathy with this group.

Hon. A. K. MacLean, in replying to a question by Mr. Mackie, East Edmonton, said that the adoption of the principle of collective bargaining was still insisted upon by the strikers as one of the terms of settlement.

Dr. Michael Clark asked if it were true that the employers had at first declined to consider the matter of collective bargaining.

### **No Date Yet Fixed for Trial**

Hon. N. W. Rowell, in reply, quoted the statement issued some days ago after a conference between various bodies concerned and the representatives of the railway brotherhoods. In this statement the principle of collective bargaining on lines recognized by the railway brotherhoods was endorsed and approved by the employers, the brotherhoods and the railways.

Replying to a question by Mr. Lemieux, Hon. Arthur Meighen stated that a date has not yet been fixed for the trial of the strike leaders.