

UNNAMED BARRISTER CHARGES THIRD DEGREE

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Represents One of Unnamed Nine Men Still Held at
Rockcliffe—Confined in Stuffy Little Rooms—
Wonders If Interim Report Ambiguous

Ottawa, March 6—(CP)—A barrister who represents one of the unnamed nine men still detained at Rockcliffe R.C.M.P. barracks in connection with the investigation of espionage activities said here today the Mounties were planning to hold the persons incommunicado until they confessed or were exonerated.

In the meantime coercion and third degree methods were being used to extort confessions, he said.

The barrister, who would not allow his name to be used, said that communications between the detained persons and their wives had been intercepted and that legal counsel was refused.

He added that the wife of his client had told him that the detained persons were confined to "stuffy little rooms in which a bright light was left burning continuously."

They were under close watch and the explanation for the light being left on throughout the night was a precaution against suicide attempts. The detained men told their wives they wanted counsel and wanted to know why none had been provided.

"It seems strange," the barrister declared, "that when the four appeared before the magistrate Monday, two of them had arranged for counsel and a third asked for time to consider whether she would retain counsel. Only one pleaded guilty to the charges.

"I am wondering if the interim report—to put it mildly—is not a little ambiguous. The whole thing looks to me like coercion."

He said he had been told by the authorities he would not be able to see his client until the man appeared in court. This indicated to him that "the police are holding out for a confession" and they hope to charge every one of the nine left at Rockcliffe with "these serious charges which are tantamount to treason."

He was of the opinion that the crown had been able "to make out a good case against Russian intentions but it doesn't look as though they will be able to pin much that is serious on the persons detained."

Assistant Commissioner Royal Gagnon of the R.C.M.P. denied members of the force had used third degree methods. "Absolute non-

sense, of course," he declared.

Persons detained were brought before a Mounted Police officer and told why they were there, he said. If they wanted to make a statement, an officer was there to take it.

"They don't have to say anything," he said.

If and when they make a statement they are brought before the royal commissioners. It was reported that the justice minister, Hon. Louis St. Laurent, had ordered "no bullying, no coercion and a fair hearing."

It was understood Lee Kelley, special crown prosecutor, has been told that the case is to be conducted "like any other case."

An official said "justice is going to lean over backward" in the case of Mrs. Emma Woikin. Although she already has pleaded guilty and been remanded to March 18 for sentence, she will be allowed to reverse her plea or withdraw it at the next hearing.

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