

point a senior general officer to command the whole force including the militia. That was the understanding although there is no clause in the measure to that effect. It was omitted—

Mr. TISDALE. I do not think you mentioned that in your explanation of the Bill.

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. Perhaps I did not. It was an oversight and it was overlooked in the preparation of the Bill, I understand, but I have in my hand a clause providing for that, which I propose to introduce later on.

The third point was in reference to relative rank. It was agreed that the clause in the present law, which places an imperial officer of junior date of appointment in the same rank over the head of a Canadian militia officer in the same rank, should be omitted.

Mr. CLARKE. From the statement made by the hon. Minister of Militia and Defence on the occasion of the introduction of the Bill on Friday last, if I may be permitted to refer to it, I was led to conclude that a fuller and more detailed statement would be made by him when the stage for the second reading of the Bill was reached. The minister is reported in 'Hansard' of Thursday last to have said: When the second reading is reached I shall have more opportunity of going into detail.

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. Exactly, and what I meant was that I would give the explanation upon each section of the Bill.

Mr. CLARKE. The members of the militia force throughout the country did not have an opportunity of reading the exact statement made by the minister in introducing the Bill, and the only way in which they can learn the exact scope of it is, to have an opportunity of perusing the Bill itself. We have not been able up to the present, to obtain enough copies of the Bill to meet the demands made upon us. Under these circumstances it would expedite the passage of the Bill if we could send copies of it to our constituents, and allow them a week or ten days to consider its provisions. If they have any objections to offer, then we can present them to the minister, and if necessary, amendments can be made. I have no doubt that the greatest possible care has been taken by the minister and his advisers in the preparation of this Bill, but there are men in the country who take a great interest in the welfare of the militia and who have made great sacrifices on its behalf, and they should have an opportunity of considering the provisions of such a measure. I have no desire at all to impede the progress of the Bill, but I think that those interested in the militia in our constituencies should have an opportunity of seeing it.

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. I agree with the spirit of the remarks of my hon. friend (Mr. Clarke) but if the suggestion of the leader of the opposition is adopted, the object the hon. gentleman has in view will be best served. I may explain further, that a number of errors have occurred in the printing of this Bill. There are clauses which are not necessary, and there are other clauses which it is proposed to change, so that the Bill as printed does not correctly convey the intention of the department. If we go on with the discussion, I shall be able to tell the House, and through the House the country, exactly what the position of this Bill is up to date. My object is to get this matter before the country, and I quite agree that those interested in the militia force should have a couple of weeks' opportunity to consider the provisions of the Bill. They will best secure that opportunity by proceeding with the discussion now.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. It seems to me that the object of my hon. friend (Mr. Clarke) would be very fully served if the Minister of Militia would put upon 'Hansard' the brief which is in his hands. We can discuss the Bill, and we need not pass any clauses at all, but the discussion being upon 'Hansard,' showing the differences between the Bill and the law as it stands, will afford the country the information which it desires.

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Hear, hear.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. Then I presume that provision could be made to distribute extra copies of 'Hansard' to those who are interested in the Bill throughout the country.

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Hear, hear.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. If that be done, then those who take an interest in the measure will understand it better than they possibly can at present.

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. I quite accede to that proposal.

Mr. INGRAM. Some of us are not ourselves military men, but we represent constituents who are, and I know that when the minister returned from England, the four prominent points in connection with this Bill were published in the newspapers. But statements in the newspapers are not always reliable and for that reason probably the militiamen did not take them into serious consideration. In order that I may be relieved of any charge of being negligent with regard to this Bill, I enter a solemn protest against such a measure being proceeded with before our constituents have an opportunity of perusing it. If the minister proceeds, I have no objection, but he must take the responsibility of proceeding without giving our militiamen an opportunity of understanding the Bill.

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. My hon. friend (Mr. Ingram) need scarcely have taken