

the House with giving the reasons for a change in addition to the fact of our one arsenal being so far east. We have had that subject discussed, and any hon. gentleman who wishes to follow it up should consult 'Hansard' of 1900, pages 8320 and 8325, and 'Hansard' of 1901, page 3786. In those discussions there was a concurrence of opinion in favour of the proposal which the general so strongly advocated. And the minister promised to look into the matter carefully at the earliest possible moment. Not only do we want an additional arsenal in western Ontario, but the time will come—and the sooner the better, finances allowing—when we should have one in Manitoba and one in the far west. Let me say, while this is in my mind, that if we have to call out the militia on a war footing it will be a very sudden call, and we shall have to face a mighty force, for our frontier is so long that its defence will always be a serious matter. Therefore, nothing should be left undone, in my opinion, that will improve our position.

Now, one more quotation from the general and I am done. This I give to show how careful and exhaustive has been his consideration of these matters, yet how simple and complete his recommendation. This relates to armouries, and the general recommends a new departure, with which, I must say, so far as my judgment goes, I am in hearty accord:

I have given much thought to the question of whether rural corps should be provided with central armouries, and having consulted all the district officers commanding I have come to the conclusion that the 'company armoury' is more suited to the conditions under which our rural militia is organized.

It is of course obvious that arms and equipment are better cared for, as a rule, in a central armoury, but this is, I conceive, the only important argument in its favour. On the other hand, to deprive the captains of their arms tends to lessen their interest in their companies, and deprives the non-commissioned officers and men of any opportunity of drilling or rifle shooting in the country hamlets and districts, for it can scarcely be expected that people will take much pride or interest in their local company which they never see. I have also observed that where rural regiments have been provided with central armouries, there is a decided leaning on the part of commanding officers to gradually convert their commands into city corps, to the very great detriment of the service, for, however good the city regiments may be, the bulk of our defence force must be the hardy men of our rural units, and anything which has a possibility of weakening that portion of the active militia is, in my opinion, greatly to be deprecated.

I, therefore, recommend that 'central armouries' should cease to be provided for rural regiments, and that, in their stead, plain substantial buildings should be hired, as at present, for company armouries at the company headquarters.

Now, with the permission of the committee, having dealt with the report and having read some important extracts from it, I will pass from it with one suggestion. I

think it will well pay every member of this House to get this excellent report and read it, especially that part of it wherein he deals with the questions of which I have given you a brief view. I propose now to give you briefly my views on the position of militia affairs in this country. Now what do we require for defensive purposes? We require men, training, instruction, arms, supplies and ammunition. What have we now? We have any number of men of the very best sort. I have explained to you what we have in the way of instruction and training. I think the instructions for the officers is ample. I wish to ask the Minister of Militia and Defence to take into his serious consideration one point with regard to the Royal Military College, and seeing to it that the General's recommendation is carried out, that the young men we educate so well there shall be compelled to serve a certain time, to make arrangements ahead, and if they are not willing to do that, then let them get that sort of military training at their own expense. While it is all right to send as many as we can, and that is only a limited number, to Great Britain, to enter the regular army, yet we need them more here. If the young gentlemen who go there understood that it was a part of the curriculum, if I may use that word, that they should serve afterwards for a certain time in some of the companies, they would become efficient officers. In that way I think the General's suggestion is well worthy of consideration. If we cannot get our young men, coming from the class they do, to take that interest in their own country, I for my part would back up the abolition of that institution, which is a point of his recommendation. Surely if they have the spirit to go there and spend time there, they ought to be willing to devote some of their time, subsequently to serving in the companies, and I am sure that one of the great difficulties the Minister of Militia and Defence finds is in getting qualified officers who are willing to serve. Then as to the camp of instruction, we all know its usefulness. We have now the best arms, clothing and supplies, and a considerable amount of ammunition, and when we come to the estimates, I shall inquire from the minister, and in case I should not be here, I would like some other gentleman to ask the Minister of Militia and Defence to present a statement to this House, showing what ammunition he has got, and where it is located.

Mr. ROCHE (Halifax). Will the hon. gentleman permit me to ask him a question? What arms have we at present in the country?

Hon. Mr. TISDALE. I cannot tell you how many; but I know that the improved rifle is sufficient for the soldiers that drill. The minister can tell.

The MINISTER OF MILITIA AND DEFENCE. 40,000 stand.