

The MINISTER OF MILITIA AND DEFENCE. I may tell my hon. friend we have not supplied any ammunition to the cadet corps.

Mr. INGRAM. The hon. gentleman, I think, suggested this afternoon that he proposed to bring down a Bill at the next session to provide that before any soldier is allowed to join the active service he has to be thoroughly tested in the matter of shooting.

The MINISTER OF MILITIA AND DEFENCE. Yes.

Mr. INGRAM. And I notice, according to the report, he is supplying associations or clubs with free ammunition and rifles, I presume, they have got to give a bond for a proper care of the rifle?

The MINISTER OF MILITIA AND DEFENCE. Yes.

Mr. INGRAM. Now we have, speaking of my own city alone, a cadet corps, I think about 60 strong. They have taken a great interest in drill, and I think the department has supplied them with ammunition to some extent, and some tubes, I believe.

The MINISTER OF MILITIA AND DEFENCE. Yes, the Morris tube.

Mr. INGRAM. I think great encouragement ought to be given to the cadet corps, the citizens take a great deal of interest in them, and have subscribed for uniforms for these boys in order to encourage them. So far as our own cadet corps is concerned, Col. Peters inspected them, and no officer could make a better report than he has made of the cadet corps in St. Thomas. They have competed with the cadet corps of London and of Chatham, and with others. It strikes me as a singular thing that clubs or associations throughout the country can be supplied with free ammunition and free rifles, subject of course to a bond for proper care when so little attention is paid to the cadet corps of our country. I think cadet corps ought to be encouraged in every possible way, and if there is any free ammunition to be given, and plenty of it, they should be supplied. They are generally young men leaving collegiate institutes, 18 or 19 or 20 years of age, and very often they join the different battalions wherever they are located. These young boys will be eventually the defenders of our country, and the drilling and training they are receiving as cadets is of very great importance to them and to the country as well. So I say again, on behalf of the cadet corps, that more attention ought to be given to them, and that the department ought not to be too particular in regard to supplying them, but that it should supply them as liberally as can be done.

The MINISTER OF MILITIA AND DEFENCE. I think there is a great deal of force in what the hon. member for East

Mr. INGRAM.

Elgin (Mr. Ingram) said, but we cannot do everything at once. I have my doubts as to whether, under the present law, we have the power without asking a special vote of parliament to do what he requests. If the law is revised, or if a new law is passed, there will be an opportunity then to make some provision for this. The age of the militiaman is now from eighteen years up, whereas, many of the cadets are under that age, and they are not, strictly speaking, members of the militia. They are, however, most important features of the militia, and I quite agree that to the utmost of our ability we should encourage them and give them the means of learning how to shoot. That can be done at a much younger age than eighteen, the lowest age for joining the militia. I have not forgotten the matter and the hon. gentleman can rest assured that I will do whatever I can to encourage these cadet corps.

Mr. INGRAM. Not being a military man I cannot discuss the question in military terms, because I have not been taught them. There is another thing that I omitted to mention and that was the question of tents. I notice in the report that there is something like 500 damaged tents at the departmental stores. I know that the cadet corps have applied frequently to the department for the use of these tents in order that they might camp out for a certain time in the summer. They have been refused on the ground that if the department were to give them to one cadet corps they would be obliged to give a great many of them to the different cadet corps throughout the Dominion. If there are 500 of these tents that are of no use for the regular militia, surely it would not be out of place to supply the cadet corps with these, because I understand they have a thorough system upon going into camp. They try as far as possible to conduct themselves on the same lines as those laid down for militiamen when they go into regular camp. This is a movement that should be encouraged and instead of obliging them to buy tents for themselves, or to borrow them, I think the department should supply them. So far as the vote of this House is concerned, I have been here long enough to know that when a number of years ago the militia estimates were before this House, the members of the House certainly did not act in a very friendly manner towards the Department of Militia. They were, if I may use the word, too stingy with the public moneys in their grants to the Militia Department, but I think, perhaps, since the difficulty in South Africa has occurred, a more generous spirit has prevailed amongst the members of the House in regard to granting more money to the Militia Department. So far as I am personally concerned, while the Militia Department to-day is asking for a considerable sum of money, I am willing to vote a greater sum than we are