

SIR JOHN A. MACDONALD introduced a Bill (No. 110) To enable the Harbour Commissioners of Montreal to pay a life annuity to the widow of the late Hon. John Young.

Bill read the first time.

MILITIA ACT AMENDMENT BILL.—

[BILL No. 70.]

(Mr. Masson.)

THIRD READING.

Order for third reading read.

MR. MASSON: I would request the hon. member for Frontenac (Mr. Kirkpatrick) not to press the amendment he spoke of when the House was in Committee. The Government are quite alive to the importance of adopting means to secure the easy and prompt discharge of members of the Volunteer Force who, by their general behaviour, have rendered themselves obnoxious to the Force. But we shall have to consider very carefully whether that power should be left to the Commanding Officer. It would be a grave thing to give that power to one single man. Although our officers are generally reliable, and actuated by the best motives, circumstances might occur to cause them to be carried away by feeling and act too severely. The Government will carefully consider the matter, and probably propose an amendment in this direction next Session, and therefore, I hope the hon. gentleman will let the subject rest until that time.

MR. ROSS (West Middlesex): I do not object to this Bill as a whole, but I think the Government is making a mistake in introducing Clause 4, which provides for the opening of canteens in connection with Regimental Camps. By the Army Regulations, canteens are established in connection with the army to provide for the exclusive use and convenience of the troops, to provide for the supply of beer, wine and other articles for the time being. I think we should make a mistake if we placed, within easy reach of our young men on the Force, the facilities for purchasing and using intoxicating liquors which the Bill provides. It is difficult enough to maintain the discipline necessary to keep the Force under proper control when intoxicating liquors are removed as far from the camp as possible; and it is usual to place the camp at some distance from

the business and active part of the town, to keep those temptations as far away as possible, as well as for other reasons. Facilities for the purchase of those liquors would likely be attended with demoralising effects to the Force. I must protest against any arrangement whereby, within easy reach and access of the Volunteers, any facilities would be provided for the sale of liquors. I am aware that the sale of liquors within the camps is expected to prevent Volunteers from straying to distant places for liquor, but I think the tendency of furnishing even a moderate supply at the camps would be to dispose the men to go to excess, by which the discipline of the Force would be broken down, and injurious personal habits formed. If we are going to keep our Volunteer Force up to that degree of respectability, influence and moral power desirable, we must not, in any way, diminish the popularity of the Force in the estimation of those who are to maintain it. I am aware that, in many parts of the country, particularly in the Province of Ontario, it is held to be a great strain upon the wholesome restraint on young men to join the Force under present circumstances, but if this additional temptation is placed in their way, I think the strain will be greater, and the dangers which I have already pointed out will be considerably increased. Besides, I would call the attention of my hon. friend the President of the Council to the fact that the sale of intoxicating liquors in Ontario, as well as in the other Provinces, is under Provincial jurisdiction; and I think this House has no power to authorise the sale of liquor of any kind upon any camp ground, inasmuch as such sale is exclusively within the jurisdiction of the Local Legislatures. I feel convinced that any person entering a complaint against the officers of volunteer companies for the sale of liquor on camping grounds, would be entitled to recover against them, and that these officers would be liable to be fined in the same way as anyone else who sells liquor without a license.

MR. MACKENZIE: We might have to fine the hon. the Minister of Militia.

MR. ROSS: If he opened a canteen in a camp ground in the Province of Ontario, I think he would have some