

hon. gentleman's views with respect to the expenditure of money. What is the militia vote? Small as it may be, what is the militia vote which the hon. gentleman took last year? It was a trifle under a million. For the whole militia force for the whole of Canada there was a trifle under a million of dollars. We are now going to expend on the Mounted Police, after this proposition is adopted, just about \$1,000,000, an equal amount to that expended on the whole militia of Canada. The hon. member for Marquette (Mr. Watson), with the shrewd, practical common sense which distinguishes him, pointed out that the Minister could do a great deal, by way of encouraging local corps in the North-West, by expending a fraction of the amount, by expending the interest for one year on the sum he is going to expend annually on the Mounted Police. That is a serious and important question. But the hon. gentleman is not afraid of proposing to expend \$1,000,000 a year on the Mounted Police in the North-West; he is not afraid of our criticism. That is all right. It is only when you come to the expense of uniforms for five companies that the hon. gentleman's heart drops into his boots, and instead of being a Minister of Militia he becomes a political poltroon.

Mr. CARON. I have more than admired the various talents of the hon. gentleman. I have admired how he displays that kind feeling, that gentlemanly feeling, for which he is so notorious. But the hon. gentleman appears before us to-night in a new role. He has lectured hon. gentlemen upon courage and bravery, and has talked of poltroonery. I believe the hon. gentleman is the last member of this House who can assume that role. From his past career and from my experience of him, I believe he is the very last member of this House who should stand here and lecture any hon. gentleman upon his courage and bravery. The hon. gentleman was evidently carried away by the very few remarks I made for the purpose of conveying information to the hon. gentleman. I meant merely to convey information, nothing else. But the hon. gentleman says the policy of the Government has been to extinguish the forces in the North-West, to destroy the companies which were at one time existing. The hon. gentleman forgets that immediately upon the reduction of the forces, in so far as regards those companies which were disorganised, we immediately organised a battalion, which was commanded by Col. Kennedy, who lost his life a short time ago when showing the devotion of Canadians to the British Government. That is a record of the policy of the Government in regard to its extinguishing forces at that time existing in the North-West. We merely collected the arms of companies which did not exist, and organised a battalion, which was the first battalion to go to the front, and which fought the first battle in defence of law and good order. That was the policy of extinguishment and of destruction that the hon. gentleman seems to be so delighted to bring before the House, in the hope that he will induce the House and the country to believe that such as he depicted it was the policy of the Government. It was not a policy of extinguishing or reducing the force, but of having a force that could be relied upon in case of emergency, as the 90th Battalion has proved itself to be, a battalion perfectly equipped and organised, and ready, at a moment's notice, to take the field and fight for the country, as every militia regiment in Canada should do. So far as those disorganised companies were concerned, that was the policy followed. Were the Government to blame for collecting arms, which were handed over to the first organisation that was raised in that district when the emergency arose occurred? The hon. member for Marquette (Mr. Watson) said he had been advocating a policy of giving arms to home guards and other military organisations in the North-West. But the hon. gentleman tried to find fault, because that wish

Mr. BLAKE.

which he expressed had not been complied with. Well, Mr. Chairman, we could not recognise any other organisation than the regular militia force. What authority had I as Minister of Militia, under the statute, to go and distribute the arms of Canada, and to give those arms to any organisation, except those which are recognised by the law of the land. The hon. member for Marquette (Mr. Watson) came to me, as several others came to me, and said the ranches were unprotected, and some other interest was unprotected; that they required a home guard, and that they required me to arm them to protect those various interests. I told the hon. gentleman that when it comes to the militia force the Department of Militia is supposed to look after the armament and equipment of that force. If any organisation is required for any special purpose, then, it is for the municipal authorities or other authorities in that country, to take the necessary precautions, so as to procure the arms which they think it proper and right to place in the hands of those men. The hon. gentleman seemed to insinuate that these arms had not been given because we had doubted the loyalty of the men applying for those arms. Well, I can only say that it was not a question of loyalty, it was a question of the Department carrying out the law which organised that Department. It was a question with the Department of doing what it was bound to do, and not going beyond its duty, by giving arms which it had no right or authority to distribute to any force other than the one recognised by that Department. Now, the leader of the Opposition has thrown out challenges. Well, when the time comes, when the papers are brought down, as to any challenges which the hon. gentleman has put forward, notwithstanding the want of bravery on the part of the Minister of Militia, I believe we can meet together upon the same ground, and I am not at all afraid to meet him when that time comes.

Mr. BLAKE. I do not propose to prolong the discussion, but the statement which the hon. gentleman has just now made, with reference to the force in the North-West, is one which should not pass without a word. I have been discussing, Sir, the question of the North-West Territories, the question of the defence, of order, in the North-West Territories, as distinct from Manitoba. You know the extent of the North-West, the comparative inaccessibility and remoteness of many points in these Territories. We are engaged in discussing that question with reference to this proposal to add 500 men to the Mounted Police. I have been arguing, as I did consistently in 1882, as the Government then agreed, as they agreed for three years before, for the formation of local forces in different parts of those remote Territories, where there might be local means advanced and a sufficient aggregation among the people, where you might strike at a moment, and not wait until you organised battalions, which would have to march 200 miles in the depth of winter.

Mr. CARON. We did organise a force.

Mr. BLAKE. What force?

Mr. CARON. The 90th Battalion.

Mr. BLAKE. Where?

Mr. CARON. At Winnipeg. Where would you organise it?

Mr. BLAKE. I am not talking about the organisation of battalions at Winnipeg, but of the armament of the organisations you had in the North-West.

Mr. CARON. Which had disappeared—which did not exist.

Mr. BLAKE. I know it disappeared; I know it did not exist. That is what I charge—that is my point. I say we