

time, in the position he holds in the province of Quebec. This is the gentleman who has the assurance to cast an imputation on my loyalty to the Liberal-Conservative party. Would or would not the hon. gentleman have been prepared to accept another military medical position, one at Victoria, since he has had a seat in this House? We know he would. And he forsooth is the man who drags the Liberal-Conservative party through the mud and mire in connection with this question of the Ross rifle. Later on I shall dissect the causes and motives of his action.

I do not object to criticism of rifles or criticism of any kind. A man in public life who thinks he is above criticism had better retire. I am always ready to meet my critics and give them a Roland for their Oliver. But we find various classes of critics. As far as the Ross rifle is concerned, there is no doubt room for some criticism. In fact there has never been a rifle issued yet that was above criticism. And whenever there has been a change of rifles, there always has been criticism and hostility to the change. When Colonel Dennison of Toronto was down here with his little operatic company playing in a theatre, one of the comedy hits was a statement that certain soldiers, in firing at the enemy, had missed, and fortunately missed, for they happened to be firing on their own friends. And when the thing came to be investigated, it was found that they were armed with the new rifle which accounted for their fortunate bad shooting. The hon. gentleman was present and his mouth almost split open with laughter because he thought the joke was on the Ross rifle. But as a matter of fact when the piece was written, the change had been made in the British army from the Martini to the Lee-Enfield, and the opposition was so strong to the change, that plays were written belittling it all over the British empire. I have never yet seen a change from one rifle to another which has not created wide dissatisfaction, unfair criticism and hostility. The soldiers, who have been accustomed to using the one rifle, will always find something to condemn in the new.

As a critic I myself am always anxious to get a crack at the enemy, but I am one of those who like to be sure of their data before going ahead. Nevertheless we cannot all examine into the details of every case, and in politics we have to be led by sentiment in many of these matters, and that is why the Liberal-Conservative party to-day finds itself committed to the motion submitted by the hon. member for Sherbrooke (Mr. Worthington). These men are absolutely honest and deserve every consideration, and I do not see why I should have the slightest feeling against any member of our party who deems it his duty to

vote for this resolution? I know what their sentiments are and what their actions would be if this thing came up six months from to-day.

We have had the criticisms of the honest riflemen of the country, but taking the sum and substance of the criticisms which the hon. gentleman laid on the table yesterday, what do they amount to? A lot of tu'penny-ha'penny little things that would not be regarded as of any importance. Fore-sight screw loose, back sight out of shape and so on. Let me give the criticism of honest riflemen. They say that for rifle shooting, you must have a heavier barrel. Well, we have got that now. I shall not charge the hon. gentleman with dishonesty because I am not sure whether he knows that the United States have a short rifle and a long rifle. The English have a short rifle and a long rifle. And at not one of the important matches in England or the United States is the short rifle used. Why then should the short rifle of Canada be put in competition with the long rifle of other lands? At the Palma match at our range last year, which the right hon. the First Minister honoured with his presence—I was sorry not to have my hon. friend the leader of the opposition there—not a short rifle was used. The Yankees since 1903 have had the short rifle but they have used the long rifle, England uses the long Lee-Enfield, and so do the Australians. Why was the hon. gentleman not honest enough to say that for target purposes the short rifle is never put in competition with the long rifle? I appeal to my hon. friend from Kings and Albert (Mr. Fowler) who, thirty or forty years ago, knew something about rifle shooting.

Mr. FOWLER. Before you were born?

Mr. SAM. HUGHES. Oh, no.

Mr. FOWLER. That is the time you won that Fenian medal.

Mr. SAM. HUGHES. That is right. I appeal to my hon. friend from Kings and Albert (Mr. Fowler) to state whether in those days he used his cavalry carbine in competition against the long Snider. These riflemen criticise the light barrel for target purposes; they criticise what I may term the abominable back sight on the rifle, and very rightly. But the back sight is one of the fads introduced in imitation of the Boers. The Mauser rifle, which was used by the Boers, had this lever sight. The sight hinged and worked from a lever back. It seemed to answer for field purposes; and consequently it was adopted, not only in England, but for a time in Canada and the United States. In Canada it has been discarded and also in the United States and its life will be short in England. The honest riflemen criticise the fastening of