

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

TUESDAY, July 11, 1905.

The SPEAKER took the Chair at Three o'clock.

SECOND READING.

Bill (No. 191) respecting the Joliette and Lake Manuan Colonization Railway Company.—Mr. Piché.

FIRST READING.

Bill (No. 197) to amend the Adulteration Act.—Mr. Bergeron.

HALF-BREED SCRIP.

On the Orders of the Day being called,

Hon. FRANK OLIVER (Minister of the Interior). I beg to lay on the table a further instalment of the papers in connection with the scrip inquiry.

Mr. FOSTER. I would like to ask the hon. minister if that fills the whole request?

Mr. OLIVER. That fills the whole request as far as we understand the direct request. Of course, these requests touch a large number of other files, which, if the hon. gentleman insists, we will have to produce, but it will mean some 200 or 300 individual files, which, as far as we can judge, are not necessary to the answering of his question. We believe we have answered his question fully with these papers which are now in his hands.

Mr. FOSTER. I will try to go over these as soon as possible, and if there is anything missing I will let you know.

MILITIA ACT AMENDMENT.

House resumed adjourned debate on proposed motion of Sir Frederick Borden for the second reading of Bill (No. 170) to amend the Militia Act.

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN (Minister of Militia and Defence). Mr. Speaker, we have had two discussions on this Bill, and at the last one it was understood that it would go over until the explanations were made upon the militia estimates. I hope that these explanations were so satisfactory that the Bill may now take its second reading without discussion.

Mr. FOSTER. The mass of information that was placed before the House has made it impossible for me, with the other work I had on hand, to give it the careful attention that I would otherwise like to have done.

There are certain things which I notice with reference to this which seem to me to be at least worth very careful consideration.

Mr. FIELDING.

The first thing that strikes me is the immense disproportion between the officers or staff and what you might call the working part of the force, whether it be the active militia or the permanent corps. In 1904 the total estimates for headquarters' and district staff pay amounted to \$81,249, while now it is estimated at \$125,000, being an increase of \$43,751 or an increase of about 50 per cent. As to the working force which this tariff is chiefly to guide and command we find that the annual drill provided for is \$700,000 in 1904-5 and \$635,000 in 1905-6, showing a decrease of \$65,000. I think the minister said that probably a supplementary vote would have to be added for drill purposes for the year 1905-6 which would make the total \$50,000 more than it was in 1904-5. Well, officers are good; they are indispensable, but officers alone can neither fight the battle nor gain the victory. It is the men who are under them who have to do the fighting and either win the victory or stand the defeat. I am not too sure of my ground, on account of my lack of knowledge of militia matters, but it would seem to me that there has been an inordinate increase in the head while the body has been left to get nearly as slim as before. The minister says: that is true to that extent, but we are going to increase the establishment of the active militia up to 100,000; we are going to have 55,000 or 45,000 drilled almost at once; we are going to gradually increase that until we have an active militia effective of 100,000 and when that takes place we will need all these officers and all this staff to provide the directing and the drilling machinery. The criticism I make is much in the line of that made by my hon. friend from Norfolk (Mr. Tisdale). I think the head has been pushed forward a little too quickly and a little too extravagantly, and that the body has been left to follow along a little too slowly. If I read anything out of the Boer war and the Japanese-Russian war, taken in connection with our own position in Canada, it seems to me the lessons we read are something like these. Canada has no business aiming at in the future and laying lines at the present time with any idea of organizing an offensive force; the furthest distance the men in authority in Canada have the right to go is to appeal to the people and to prepare the machinery and to take measures which will put Canada in a good defensive position. I do not imagine that there is any jingoism latent or displayed in Canada which would ever think of Canada undertaking offensive operations. What we want to do is to organize for the defence of Canada on her own soil. The lesson that has been taught in the recent wars is that the defence of the country is comparatively much more easy now than it was supposed to be in past times, and that if you have a really formidable body of men who are somewhat used to discipline and understand the use