

knows that if a man is competent in squad and company drill he will soon be able to pick up battalion and brigade drill, because battalion and brigade drill is only an enlarging of what he has already learned. I think that the most effective thing in our locality would be a few mounted corps. We have as good men as we had in 1866 and 1870, and we have the horses. If a volunteer force is necessary at all—and I am not going to discuss that phase of the question—it should be necessary on the frontier. As I have already stated, we have sixty miles of a frontier in the county of Huntingdon with only an imaginary line between our county and the United States; and, if it is this country we fear, surely it is important that we should have a force near the frontier. If we had four squadrons of mounted troops, they could probably be made an effective force. Whether they would object to going into camp or not, I do not know, but I know that that was one of the great difficulties in connection with our volunteer system—the difficulty of getting men to go to camp. Latterly, captains forming companies were obliged to take in men who were not suitable for the service, and those of the most desirable class who might have gone were not willing to go into camp with the majority of those whom the captains had to accept. The consequence is that the volunteer militia force of the frontier not only in the county of Huntingdon, but throughout the eastern townships, is practically only upon paper.

So much so that our 16 companies, as I said before, have now been reduced to 4 companies, and they are only the bones of companies. I understand if we want to keep up a militia system we must at least have arms and the nucleus of a force in the country. But I do not see any way of adapting ourselves to the circumstances, so far as we are concerned, except by getting up mounted troops, squadrons of mounted infantry, or something of that kind. I think myself, there might be some system adopted by which we could go into camp not more than once in three years, with part of the drill done at home and part in camp. But one great objection is the going to camp, and there is the feeling that they do not get the instruction in camp which they think they ought to get for the time that the camp continues. Whether our people would be willing to remain longer in camp, I am not prepared to say; but my experience has been that in 12 days in camp you do not get more, at the outside, than 7 days of actual work; and to try to make British soldiers, or soldiers at all, out of boys in about 7 days drill out of 365, is a difficult thing to do, and of course you can understand that they cannot be very effective.

Another thing that I am pleased to see is that they are taking up the practice of rifle shooting more generally. Rifle shooting

at our camps has been a very perfunctory performance, there was not much attention paid to it, and I do not think that there was the good result from it that there should be. One of the difficulties of course in new places is that of getting proper butts, so that we could use with safety the new rifles now in use.

Our county is the most western in the province of Quebec, and there are not many corps in our vicinity, and we do not feel able to erect suitable butts to use the modern rifles now in use, as they carry to such a great distance. With the old Snider-Enfield rifles not nearly such expensive butts were necessary.

I was pleased to hear the minister state this afternoon that they were making a new kind of ammunition which would not be so dangerous as the other and which was costing less. But as I stated before, if an effective force is to be kept up on the frontier, on our frontier at least, something else is necessary to be done. I do not know what it should be. Of course one of the objections is the pay, although that is not the main objection. Of course we would like to receive larger pay than we have been receiving, although that is a paltry matter. But, if it is felt there is a necessity, and that seems to be the feeling of the House, that a large volunteer force should be kept up in this Dominion, so far as our frontier is concerned, there will have to be some new means devised, because we are, practically speaking, without any militia force on our frontier at the present time.

Mr. SPROULE. I would like to say a few words with reference to some remarks of the hon. member for Huntingdon (Mr. MacLaren). He says that if the number of members in the House during this discussion is to be taken as a measure of the military enthusiasm of the country, it must be very low. Well, in my judgment it cannot in any sense be taken as an evidence of the military ardour of our people.

I think there is another explanation for the lack of interest among the members. I have been in this House for some years, and I have noticed that whenever members of this House, who are not connected with any of the military organizations, venture to express an opinion or take part in the discussion on votes in the estimates for military purposes, the few colonels that are in the House, or other military men, rather sneer at them as if they were doing something they had no right to do. I have seen that very frequently in this House, until many members who would like to say something refrain from doing so because they might be regarded as impertinent. Now, I never believed, nor do I believe to-day, that it is the part of wisdom for non-military men to take no part in these discussions. Whether a member of this House might be regarded as an expert in the line which he

Mr. MACLAREN (Huntingdon).