

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN— to assist and also such men as Colonel Henry Smith.

Mr. TAYLOR. Another good man.

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. A former district officer commanding, and I think one of the ablest authorities on a matter of that kind in the Dominion of Canada. These men were members of a committee composed of six or seven officers which for days, and I may say, weeks, had the subject under consideration, and the Bill which I now propose is very largely the result of the consultation which these gentlemen held. Of course, I have had the opinion of the general officer commanding and I have had the opinion of certain members of the headquarters staff whose opinions I thought would be of value. I merely mention this to show that this is no slipshod measure, but that it is a well digested measure to which, I think, we all, the members of the headquarters staff and the officers generally of the militia, have given our very best attention. Now, I am very anxious indeed that it should be considered by the leading military men throughout the country, but at the same time I think it could better go on *pari passu* with our discussion here. I accept the suggestion of my hon. friend, the leader of the opposition, that this Bill should remain in committee. The discussion of it will be reported to the public, the Bill will be distributed and we will not complete its consideration. It will remain in committee and it will be open to any one to go back over the sections which have been considered and make suggestions before the Bill reaches the third stage. I do not persist at all in this view, but it seems to me that there is no reason why we should adopt the suggestion of my hon. friend from Toronto (Mr. Clarke), but that on the contrary, there is every good reason why some progress should be made at this sitting of the committee.

Hon. CHARLES FITZPATRICK (Minister of Justice). I think we all fully agree with the object which my hon. friend from Toronto (Mr. Clarke) has in view and which no doubt is that the greatest possible amount of accurate information in respect to this Bill should be given to the general public—

Mr. CLARKE. And to militia officers in particular.

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Yes, but I think my hon. friend's object would be more easily attained if we were to adopt the suggestion of my hon. friend the leader of the opposition (Mr. Borden, Halifax). The hon. Minister of Militia and Defence, myself and the hon. leader of the opposition have very carefully prepared briefs in our possession in which the clauses in the law as it stands now are set forth as well as the changes suggested and the reasons for these changes. If my hon. friend will

Mr. CLARKE.

permit me we might take each clause of the new Bill, point out in what respect that clause varies from the law as we now have it, and indicate the reasons for the change, and while not adopting any one clause but going right on through the Bill from beginning to end the House will be well informed and get all the information which we have in our briefs at the present time. Without adopting any one of the clauses we might indicate in what respect a particular clause differs from the law as we now have it, giving the reason for the change, and then allow the matter to stand in abeyance to resume its consideration at a later date. In the interval every member of the House of Commons will have all the information that can possibly be desired and this information will, of course, go to the country. I trust my hon. friend will understand the object we have in view and I think that if we adopt the suggestion of the hon. leader of the opposition that object will be attained.

Mr. TISDALE. The question which I wish to ask the hon. Minister of Militia and Defence might well be asked now, because if he has had any communications from the imperial government I would like to have them put upon the table. Have the government had any communications from the imperial government in connection with this Bill?

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. Yes.

Mr. TISDALE. Are these communications in writing? I remember when we made a change before that you were kind enough to hand in all of these communications except one or two that were confidential. If there are any that are not of this character I was going to ask you at the first opportunity to produce them.

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. I have no authority yet to lay anything on the table of the House, but I think there is no objection to my stating substantially—in fact I did state substantially in what I said on the first reading—what had occurred. The only matters which were considered were four in number. First, there was the omission from the present law of all reference to the naval militia. That was agreed to on the explanation made by me that the naval militia would be provided for by a separate Bill to be introduced by my hon. friend the Minister of Marine and Fisheries (Hon. Mr. Préfontaine). The second point was in reference to the question of the limitation existing in our present law as to the appointment of the general officer commanding. It was agreed that the limitation by which a Canadian officer may not be appointed should be omitted, with the understanding that in time of war—and this is provided in the present law really—when the militia is called out to act jointly with regular troops, the Crown, shall ap-