

men in Canada have been trained in rifle shooting during the last two years with the aperture sight. All the competitions at the various ranges have been with the use of that sight. Is all that training to be of no avail? Are our riflemen who have been trained in that way to go home to England and not be permitted to compete with their own rifle and with that sight attached to it, and must they be compelled to compete under entirely adverse conditions with a rifle and a sight in the use of which they have not been trained? I notice it is stated in the press that the minister has declared that the result of this action would be that no Canadian team could go to Bisley this year. The selection of the Bisley team, and its superintendence, I understand, as a matter of form, if not in reality, have always been under the control of the Dominion Rifle Association. But the department occupies a controlling position towards it, because we have to find the funds which enable these prizes to be offered and these expeditions to the competitions to be taken. I brought this matter up with a view of ascertaining what is the opinion of the minister, and what action he intends to take with reference to this pin-prick, to use words which were used some years ago in a somewhat similar matter under different circumstances. Is this arm, which has been recognized by both political parties as the national arm of Canada, to be discredited by these continual attacks from some interested source in the mother country, or, is the minister to stand by the weapon which Canadian riflemen use, and which every one recognizes to-day to be complete and satisfactory in every particular? I trust we shall hear from the minister on the subject.

Hon. SAM. HUGHES (Minister of Militia): The subject which the hon. member has brought to the attention of the House, has been receiving careful consideration by my officers and myself for some time past. It will be well to place before the House the condition of matters as they stand. The National Rifle Association of Great Britain was formed in 1860 at the direct request of Her late Majesty, Queen Victoria, and its charter states that it was formed for the purpose of giving permanence to volunteer corps, naval and military, and to encourage rifle shooting throughout our dominions. Canada being one of these dominions, our militia are absolutely eligible to compete at these matches. The

[Mr. Macdonald.]

management of the National Rifle Association in Great Britain is handed over to a general council, which in turn elects an executive council to manage the matches. For a number of years there was very little progress made, and it was only when Canadian militiamen came to use the weapon which is now universally adopted in our country that any objection was made on the part of those across the water, on the ground that Canadians were not armed with the same rifle as were the British.

Let me state emphatically that we are supplied with what is recognized by volunteers and soldiers throughout the world as the obsolete ammunition of Great Britain. Great Britain uses a cartridge, which in many respects is regarded as not being up to date. Nevertheless, in order that there might be no confusion of ammunition, if Canadian troops ever have to again fight side by side with the British, we use the same ammunition as they do. In other words, their cartridge fits our rifle and our cartridge fits their rifle, so that there may be no trouble in presence of the enemy. But we will not use their obsolete rifle.

It is held by the best rifle experts in the world that the Lee-Enfield is no longer a first-class weapon to place in the hands of soldiers in the field. We have insisted on the Ross rifle, a rifle which is universally regarded by every fighting force in the world as the best weapon for the soldier to be armed with in time of war. The Ross rifle, of course, has passed the experimental stage.

Canada has made progress in rifle sighting. Formerly we had a forward sight, and then we had a back sight in the middle of the rifle, and there was a long space between the eye of the soldier and the back sight, so that in order to line on the target he had to line through the back sight and the fore sight on the bull's eye. A letter has been published recently by Major McHarg, of Vancouver, one of the most distinguished Canadian riflemen—an officer who has been on the Bisley team several times, and who had the honour last year of making the highest score ever known in the history of rifle shooting—in which he points out the impossibility of a man's eye seeing three objects in alignment at the same time. Consequently, on account of its superiority, the United States and other nations, as well as Canada, have adopted the aperture sight. By placing the aperture sight as near to the eye as possible, and leaving as great a distance between the rear sight and the forward