

and men in the militia, that they may have an opportunity of expressing their views in regard to the cases, and I say this because there is a feeling among the members of the militia organizations that especially for the last few years we have been practically drifting. There has been a great deal of dissatisfaction among the officers and men of the force, and I think that the time has arrived for the matter to be taken into careful consideration, and an enquiry made in some way, either by a commission or in any other way that would be most effective to make it clear what reorganization ought to take place in order to put the militia in a more effective condition than at the present time. I say for myself that I am in favor of any vote of money that would accomplish this end. Hon. gentlemen have taken the opportunity of calling the attention of the House to the very unsatisfactory state of affairs with regard to the militia, and I think that almost every session gentlemen interested in this matter, perhaps those on the other side more frequently than on this side, have called attention of the Government to the unsatisfactory state of the militia. And I say that I believe now is a very opportune time, instead of voting this amount of money to be appropriated, perhaps, very unsatisfactorily to the force. In following purely the advice of the British War Office and the British officers, it should not be forgotten that conditions are so very different that many mistakes have been made, and, maybe, after a large amount of money has been expended, we shall find that it is devoted to a purpose and expended in a manner that is not best in the interests of the Canadian militia. I say we have not had sufficient information to enable us to clearly discuss this matter and to express our views as to whether we are moving in the right direction or not, I say not only the details of how this particular money is to be expended, but the whole question of the reorganization of the militia force ought to be considered. I think it is unfortunate that we have not the Minister of Militia in this House when this large amount of money is being asked for and important matters in connection with the militia are being discussed. I believe that no harm could come to the militia of the country if this matter was postponed until such information and report can be presented as will enable us to arrive at such conclusions as will be to the best interest of the militia force and of the country.

MR. McMULLEN—I have listened with a great deal of attention to this discussion. I am quite surprised that the Government should have assumed the responsibility of placing a contract of this magnitude after Parliament had been called together, and without consulting the representatives of the people before doing so. If there was any object in placing the order in the hands of the manufacturers of war implements the

Government should have asked the House to consent to it. I can understand an act of this kind in the case of an emergency arising when it was impossible to get the representatives of the people together; but under the conditions that existed at the time this order was given, and in the face of the fact that the representatives of the people were here, the transaction was a gross violation of the principles of representative government, and the Opposition should resent pointedly and determinedly the assumption of power on the part of the Government. Is Parliament here merely to register the decrees of the Government? Are we here merely for the purpose of endorsing what the Government do? Are we here to bow in quiet and submissive obedience to what they consider to be right? I do not consider that is the duty of the representatives of the people. We are here to criticise, we are here to investigate. While I realize the responsibility resting upon a Government in extraordinary cases, I say that under the conditions in which this contract was let, when the representatives of the people were in session, in face of the intimation in the Speech from the Throne that they were going to be asked to consent to an expenditure of this kind, for the Government to come down at the close of the session and say they have made this expenditure and ask us to endorse it, in my humble opinion they are guilty of a gross violation of the constitution, and an abuse of the position they occupy. I consider that this House is not justified in ratifying this contract. The necessities of the case were not so urgent. Why, every time that a little ripple passes over the glassy sea of peace, we are not to take fright and launch out into great expenditures. Every time that England may have a little trouble with Venezeula or some other minor republic on this continent, are we going to justify the Government in making enormous expenditures with the expectation that war is going to take place between us and the United States? I do not think there was any justification for it at all. We know perfectly well that every time a general election is drawing on in the United States, they get up a war scare, and make announcement that there are going to be difficulties, and they do it all for a purpose. We have got accustomed to that kind of thing; we have a repetition of it every three or four years. We listen to these things, we see in the American press the expressions of hostility and bitterness, but England understands all that. Why, sir, tail-twisting has become a common thing in the United States, and because we see a little exhibition of it now and then, are the people of this country going to be driven into making enormous expenditures for war purposes? Why, we should have to do that every three or four years, whenever a general election takes place in the United

States. I have no doubt after the approaching election in the United States something else will arise, some other difficulty may come up and disturb the peaceful horizon of this continent, and then, if hon. gentlemen opposite are in power, they will rush into another contract for two or three millions, with the idea that we are going to have trouble at once. I contend that the course the Government has taken is most objectionable, and should meet with the condemnation of this House. When the representatives of the people were assembled here the Government had no right to enter into this contract without asking our consent. And now, in the dying hours of this session, we are asked to sanction an expenditure of two or three millions for the purpose of purchasing war material, when in reality there was no sufficient justification for it by anything that occurred in the United States.

MR. LISTER—It is not a matter of scare or no scare so far as the proposed expenditure is concerned. I have no doubt the Government pretended they were scared, whether they were or not. Where it enables them to expend two or three million dollars, they will often get scared, because if there is a Government in the world that likes to spend money, it seems to me that the gentlemen who occupy the Treasury benches today are just that Government. Now, this militia question has been discussed over and over again in this House for the past 13 years. It is a notorious fact that the militia of this country is in a thoroughly disorganized condition. The attention of the Government has been called to it session after session, but our representations have fallen upon deaf ears. Soldiers through the country were complaining, session after session, of the material that was supplied to them for clothing, and the Government took no steps to remedy it. Favorites of the Government were supplying this clothing, inferior clothing that the militiamen put on and which would scarcely last a week, in some cases not a day. But suddenly, because the President of the United States, on account of a little apparent trouble between Great Britain and Venezeula, because of a little proclamation issued by the President of the United States for the purpose of catching votes, as the presidential election was coming on, the hon. gentlemen on the Treasury benches thought fit to get panicky, they became afraid that Canada was going to be invaded, that war was going to take place between the United States and England. Why, sir, if they live until war takes place between the United States and England they will live to be a great many times older than the oldest of them to-day. But they used that as a pretext for the purpose of expending three millions of the money of the people of this country. The hon. gentleman says it was a critical period. I have no doubt that the hon. gentleman