

On the vote for brigade majors, salaries, transport expenses, &c., \$15,100, **LT.-COL. KIRKPATRICK** said:—This vote brings up a question in connection with the staff who are doing duty in Ontario, and I wish to call the attention of the Minister of Militia to the fact that he has recently amalgamated the 3rd and 4th military districts, and that in those districts there are only two staff officers, Col. Straubensee, the Deputy Adjutant General, and Col. Lewis, the Brigade Major. These districts extend from Bowmanville east to the Provincial line, and include about 6,000 volunteers, scattered over a very large tract of country. The Deputy Adjutant General is occupied most of the time at Kingston, where he is employed on boards, and on courts of enquiry and on courts-martial, and I believe he is unable to give that attention to the duties of the district which is necessary. Very much the same was the case with his predecessor, Col. Villiers. As a result of this the regiments in that district are not visited and inspected with that regularity and frequency which is expected, and, as a matter of fact, for years past there has not been the regular inspection of arms and clothing which is required by the orders and regulations. I submit to the hon. gentleman that he should appoint another staff officer for these two districts. At present there is practically only one staff officer who is available for the purpose in that extensive district, and I think another brigade major should be appointed there. When I state that the rifles and the arms and accoutrements in that district are not inspected as they should be and that there is Government property which is not looked after with the regularity which is required, I submit that the minister should look into the matter, and, should not, from any false motives of economy, say: "I will not appoint another staff officer there," because I believe the House would willingly vote the money in order to have the Government property, which should be under the care of Government officers, efficiently looked after. I know many cases where the arms are in such condition that they should be called in and repaired, and there is no use, as we all know, in putting in the hands of our volunteers arms in which the locks, when they are taken out to the butts, are so useless that the men cannot fire with them.

**MAJOR GUILLET**.—I endorse and corroborate everything which has been said by the hon. member for Frontenac (Mr. Kirkpatrick) as to the pressing necessity for another staff officer in these districts to look after the proper condition of the arms and accoutrements of the men. In all the other districts in the Dominion, there are two staff officers in each, while in this case there are only two for the two districts. I do not understand on what ground this can be justified. There are just as many men in the service in each of these districts as in the other districts of the country, and I do not understand how it can be expected that the work can be looked after by only two officers. The result is that the work is not done, and serious damages are resulting to the equipment of the different regiments. Pressing representations have been made to the Minister of Militia by every member representing those districts, and I am sure that a change is urgently needed; and, if it is of any importance at all to have the arms properly looked after, the change should be speedily made. I can assure the Minister of Militia that this matter requires his earnest consideration in order that he may find a remedy. The fact that the brigade major, upon whom this duty devolves, lives at Brockville, makes it necessary that when he does, once a year, or less frequently, visit the other district, he has to travel a long distance and at considerable expense. Therefore, on the score of economy, the work could be done much cheaper if another officer was appointed, or at least without much additional expense, as a large portion of the expenditure for travel would be saved. I hope the minister will take this matter into his favorable consideration and have the appointment made.

**LT.-COL. KIRKPATRICK**.—I would like to ask the Minister of Militia whether the Deputy Adjutant General at Kingston has requested the appointment of an assistant of the staff?

**SIR ADOLPHE CARON**.—Heretofore I have had difficulty to keep down the expenses of the staff. Hon. gentlemen who take an interest in militia matters have told me time and again that it was far better to reduce the staff and give the amount thus saved to the rank and file, and I have tried to comply with those suggestions. Now, as soon as the staff is reduced in one district, hon. gentlemen in Parliament who, no doubt, know the locality where they live, are subjected to pressure to have deserving officers appointed to those positions. Occasionally gentlemen come to me and asked that this staff be increased. We cannot properly admit that the service is not sufficiently carried out as it is. The Deputy Adjutant General at Kingston is one of the most efficient officers that we have in the service. I cannot tell the hon. gentleman if he has made any representation to that effect; if he has, he did so to the major and it has not come before me. But I cannot at all admit that the service is not efficiently carried out with the present staff in those districts. To-day the facilities for travelling from one place to another are very different to what they were a few years ago. There are railways in every direction, and it is much easier now than formerly for officers of the staff

to perform their duties. Until I am convinced that it is necessary to increase the staff, I cannot recommend any change.

#### CARE OF ARMS.

On the vote public armories and care of arms, including pay of storekeepers, caretakers, storemen and armorers, \$60,000, **MR. BARRON** said:—I do not think there is a weaker spot in the whole management of the Department than the care given to the arms throughout the country. My information comes from all quarters that the care and custody of the arms are such that rifles and guns, when taken out occasionally, are absolutely useless. I had occasion lately to see some gentlemen in Peterboro' who gave me the information that by reason of the policy pursued by the Minister of Militia in regard to the volunteers in that part of Ontario, no care whatever was taken of the arms. They complain that proper accommodation has not been given, and they lay the blame entirely upon the Department. Now it is perfectly nonsensical to my mind to go to an enormous expense in having a militia force and to find the arms insufficient when occasion may require to use them. I, therefore, think that more attention should be given to the care of the arms, and that the minister should see that throughout the country such care is taken of them as that they may be useful when occasion arises.

**SIR ADOLPHE CARON**.—I think the experience of the past has shown that when we required to use the arms, they were found to be in very serviceable order. Whenever we were called upon to draw upon the resources of the Department, we found the arms were in very good order. But I must admit frankly that all the arms which we have in the Dominion of Canada are not in perfect order; but I claim that for the amount of money which Parliament has put at the disposal of the Militia Department, everything possible has been done to keep the arms in proper order. Some complaints occasionally come in after a camp that certain stands of arms are not in as perfect a condition as they might be, but it must be remembered that we have the most experienced armorers all over the Dominion, men brought out from England and placed at large centres like Toronto, Quebec and Halifax, and the arms are at once sent to them to be repaired. Of course that takes some little time; but hon. gentlemen on considering the amount of money voted by Parliament, will, I am sure, be sufficiently fair to admit that with the amount voted it is impossible to do any better than has been done in the past and is being done now.

**MR. CAMPBELL**.—I called the Minister's attention to the fact that the armory in Chatham, belonging to the 24th Battalion, is in a very bad state. I have already called the Minister's attention to it, and he promised to look into it. I trust it will not be forgotten. I am told that had it not been for the caretaker removing the arms to another building, which he rented, they would have been rendered entirely useless. The account he had rendered for the rent of the building, however, has not yet been paid, and I should like to learn from the Minister why it has not yet been settled.

**SIR ADOLPHE CARON**.—I promised to look after the arms and the repairing of them, and I have given instructions accordingly. I made no promise, however, in regard to paying rent. The hon. gentleman knows that we pay a certain amount to companies for looking after the arms. Of course I will look into the matter. I cannot say whether it is a special case or not. If so, it will be treated as a special case, but, judging at first blush, I should imagine that the arms should have been taken care of by the captains of companies who received a certain amount for the purpose. I will ascertain how the matter stands.

**MR. TROW**.—I understood the Minister to say that the arms were everything that could be desired in regard to efficiency. Judging from our past experience I should doubt whether such is the case. If the arms is so satisfactory and the ammunition is unsatisfactory, surely the latter should be looked after as well as the arms themselves.

**LT.-COL. KIRKPATRICK**.—In justice to the Minister of Militia I should say that from all the accounts I have received, the ammunition made at the cartridge factory at Quebec is as perfect as it can be made. The riflemen of the Dominion support my statement that it is better than any ammunition imported from the old country. There were great complaints in respect to the ammunition turned out from the cartridge factory at first, but I have had some dealings with riflemen all over the Dominion, and from all sides I receive reports that the ammunition made this year has been as good as can be manufactured; in fact, that it has reached perfection.

**LT.-COL. PRIOR**.—I endorse what has been stated by the hon. member for Frontenac (Mr. Kirkpatrick). We have tried this ammunition in British Columbia lately, and we have found without doubt that the ammunition manufactured by the Canadian Government is far ahead of any we have ever had from Great Britain. No doubt there was a time when it was very bad, but I believe that at the present time it is as good as can possibly be made.