

I think they sent him down to Kingston on some official business, but he didn't serve out his full time, and came back home in a week or ten days. And that is the man who takes care of the arms in the town of Woodstock. He has control of the arms and accoutrements of the Woodstock camp of the field battery, and of the engineering corps. Well, the engineering corps have only two or three old wagons, a few shovels and spades, and a few Ross rifles—they are all right of course. But let me point out that the government have just supplied the 10th Field Battery with new 18 pounder field guns, costing many thousands of dollars; and here is a man of the class I have described who is put in charge of them, a man who would not even fill out his time at Kingston, and the arms of the 10th Field Battery to-day are in the hands of a man, I won't say he is irresponsible, but I do not think he knows much about the care of arms. I sincerely hope my hon. friend will pause before he dismisses efficient officers and caretakers, and appoints men of this character to their places. I am sorry my hon. friend had not arrived at this laudable decision he now professes before he took the opportunity of dismissing a man from office who does know something about the business, and who has some interest in the affairs of the country.

Mr. HUGHES (Victoria). The man who was dismissed was a very good man if he had attended to his business, but he made himself very offensive during the elections. However, I may say frankly that in several cases we have refused to accept applicants because they were not competent. I may say also without fear of offending any of my good friends, that I am making it a requirement now that the man who is recommended must always be fit for his business, and if I cannot get a good Tory I will take the best man I can get.

Mr. CARVELL. Will the minister say that this qualification shall be retroactive?

Mr. HUGHES (Victoria). I go forwards, but not backwards.

Mr. MACDONALD. I am surprised to hear the minister say that one of the essential qualifications for such appointments is that the man must be a Tory.

Mr. HUGHES (Victoria). The first essential is qualification; then, of course, we look to his politics.

Mr. MACDONALD. My hon. friend said a moment ago that the principle he was going to adopt was that if he can not find a good Tory, then he will look around and find somebody else. That is an unfortunate announcement for my hon. friend to

make at the inception of his career. Everybody agrees that the Minister of Militia, above all others, should aim to keep the militia out of politics. There is not much to be gained in making appointments to the militia from a political standpoint. I do not think any political party would be advanced or injured if a man was appointed as caretaker who was not a supporter of the government.

Mr. HUGHES (Victoria). How would my hon. friend suggest I should proceed?

Mr. MACDONALD. I know my hon. friend has had very high aspirations in reference to this matter in the past, and I would suggest that he should proceed upon the advice of the commanding officers of the regiments in the different places where arms are to be looked after, and be guided by responsible people in the military service. I am sorry to hear from the minister that he proposes to administer his department in the manner he has indicated.

Mr. HUGHES (Victoria). Outside of promotions of high officials, I have no hesitation in saying that as between two men, one qualified and the other unqualified, the qualified man being a Liberal and the unqualified one being a Tory, the Liberal will get the job. But other things being equal, both being qualified, the Tory will get the job. There is no use in denying it, that is the rule that both sides have followed, that is the rule my hon. friend would pursue, I am satisfied of that. But I will say this, that so far we have had a little trouble in appointing some of those men and finding they were not exactly qualified. I think in some instances we have even stretched our conscience in appointing Liberals.

Mr. CARVELL. Then we are to understand that there is to be politics in the militia in future?

Mr. HUGHES (Victoria). If my hon. friend chooses to call that politics, it is politics.

Mr. MACDONALD. It is unfortunate in a sense. Nobody questions that the patronage system obtains in this country in regard to every branch of the service. But my hon. friend has vociferously proclaimed in the past that there should be no politics. On many occasions hon. gentlemen on both sides of the House have urged that in the Militia Department the patronage system should be disregarded, and that only men who are suitable should be appointed to responsible positions.

Mr. HUGHES (Victoria). For official positions.

Mr. MACDONALD. I regard the appointment of a man who is the caretaker