

headquarters. That may not be practicable now, but if it were practicable, I believe that we could get the same class of men into the force as we had from 1863 to 1875. And here again I might say that the class of men we have had turning out to camp during the last ten or fifteen years is not the class of men upon whom we would have to rely in case they were needed for the defence of the country. As I have just said, we are an agricultural county, and our people somewhat object to letting their sons go—and the sons also object to going—to camp probably during the latter part of June or the beginning of July, just at the busy season of the year. Another feeling that a good many people have is that they do not think it is possible to make soldiers out of boys in twelve days. You know how business is done at the camp. It takes a day to go and a day to come home. Then there is Sunday, and, generally, one or two rainy days. My experience is that, out of the twelve days in camp, you never get more than seven or eight days of actual work. I think the present Minister of Militia is improving the matter very much in this direction. At the same time, I never could see the sense of trying in ten or twelve days in a year to make Tommies out of our boys.

The one great objection to the way the militia was conducted in the past was the irrational dress the boys were expected to wear. I believe that that has been improved; but, not having kept up an intimate knowledge of the force, I cannot speak definitely on this subject. I suppose all will agree with me when I say that there is no more independent class of people than our farmers' sons. The artisans in cities, operatives in factories, or clerks in stores, are under some sort of discipline and restraint, but that is unknown to the boys on the farm. You know how a young man rigs himself up when he is going to work on a hot day in the latter part of June. He puts on as little clothes as he can decently wear. A pair of trousers, a shirt, a broad straw hat, and a pair of shoes, that is about all. If he is warm, he will roll up his shirt sleeves and open the collar. Suppose one of these lads goes into camp. He is taken to headquarters—I am speaking of the olden times—and given a pair of woollen trousers and a red tunic with cloth as thick as a board. For fear it would not be warm enough, the tunic is lined with nice soft flannel. This tunic is buttoned up to the neck. The lad wears a two-inch belt around his waist and a three-inch strap over his shoulders with a great pouch hanging over his hip. When it comes to inspection day and he is in full dress, he has a hideous knapsack on his back, on top of which is placed a tin canteen with an oil cloth cover. Then he has a small round woollen cap stuck on the top of his head, and now he is complete. In that guise he is taken to camp. Now, fortunately for me,

when in camp I always had the privilege of riding on horseback. But I have pitied these young men when on inspection on a very hot day, when they must be in full dress or heavy marching order with knapsack and all the other accessories. These boys were taken out at ten o'clock in the morning. They marched, perhaps for a mile or two, to some large field, where the inspection was to be held. They would be lined up, and about twelve the general would come, a *feu de joie* would be fired, and then these boys were marched back into camp at half past one or two o'clock, having been with this hideous rig on for three or four hours. And I have heard these boys in their tents cursing the rules that made these things necessary and swearing that they would never come to camp again. And very often they did not go—and I for one do not blame them for it. I believe there has been an improvement in these respects, but that was one great objection to our militia system. And here let me say that I do not know whether it is the best thing to have an officer of the British army at the head of our militia force. I may be radical in that, but I think that any officer in the British army who takes our boys for twelve days and thinks he is going to put them on the footing of British soldiers, is making a mistake. They are learning a lesson in South Africa. A map may not be able to put his heels together, face, salute and do all that sort of thing, but if he can ride, and shoot straight. I would not care whether he had a red coat on or what he wore. Too much time has been spent in connection with our militia, in trying to mould the boys on the model of soldiers of the British army. I am glad to see that the department is getting rid of this paraphernalia and dressing the men in khaki suits with bandoliers. I never could see the necessity of subjecting the volunteers of our Dominion to the hardship of wearing such an outfit when performing their annual drill. I have seen the foreheads and ears of the men blistered so badly that you could see traces of it for some time after they returned to their homes, on account of the change from the straw hat they generally wore to the woollen cap. If more common sense were used in connection with our militia we should have a better service. What I say is, generally speaking, true of the whole frontier of the province of Quebec. There is not an effective battalion on the frontier, except the one with its headquarters at Sherbrooke. I am not speaking to find fault but simply to set forth matters as they are in my own locality. But after what I have said it will be thought that I ought to suggest some remedy for this difficulty. Well, of course, one of the changes that would suit us—whether the department would regard it as practicable or not, would be to have more drill at home and less in camp. Any one who is acquainted with military matters