

the great interest they take in those battalions and their readiness to aid in a popular movement, because if they did not think it was a popular movement the county councils would not assist the corps. I can speak for the county of York, within which my constituency lies, and notwithstanding the character that attaches to that county of being the meanest and richest county in Ontario, the members have more than once granted money to the county battalion. It is the best proof that can be given that such a change would be popular, and that the expenditure would be approved by the people. I hope this year, and if not this year, next year, the Government will place a sufficient sum in the estimates to drill all the militia force in Canada.

MR. BARRON.—Unlike my hon. friend who has just spoken, I represent a constituency where there is a rural battalion, and I can tell the Minister that there is intense dissatisfaction among the volunteers in my district on account of the fact that they are not called out annually. We might as well dispense altogether with the expenditure on the rural corps, if we are not going to call them out yearly. The result of the present system is, that when they are called out the officers have to go around the country to get recruits to attend the drill. Before the next time for drill comes round those who were in the ranks have left and a new set of men have to be got, and the result of this is that discontent is caused among the rural battalions. I feel sure of this, that if we are not going to have the rural battalions called out annually, or every two years at all events, the money expended is just so much wasted and might as well be thrown into the sea.

GENERAL LAURIE.—I cannot agree with my hon. friend who has just addressed the committee. I consider the rural battalions are marvellously efficient for the time they are able to give to the service. I do not hesitate to say it; but at the same time it is very unfair to both officers and men that the rural corps should be only called out once every second or third year, thereby placing them at an immense disadvantage compared with their comrades of the city corps. An examination of the Estimates show that \$1,288,000 are spent in all on the militia, of which only \$250,000 are expended on the men of the force, the balance, practically one million, being required to work the machine by which the men who receive \$250,000 are drilled. That is the position of affairs. For that sum we get 20,000 men drilled. Give another \$150,000 and you can drill 40,000. You can double your force by simply adding that small amount to the large expenditure—that is, comparatively large as to the number of men drilled—which we make on the militia. I, therefore, feel bound to add my voice to those of the hon. member who have spoken, urging that the rural battalions shall be trained every year. I believe it to be of excessive importance to the country that these battalions, so ready as they proved to be in 1885 and previous years, shall be made as efficient as possible.

MR. HESSON.—I fully concur in all that has been said on behalf of the rural battalions, for I think that it is of very great importance to Canada that they should receive the countenance and support of the Government. We should remember that it is purely from patriotic feelings that these young men abandon in many cases lucrative employments, to pursue their drill for twelve days of the year. The country battalions suffer under many serious inconveniences, and I hope that the Government will put the Minister of Militia in possession of sufficient funds to improve their condition. It has come to be a question whether or not the training of some half of the battalions should not be abandoned, but I believe it would be a most injudicious course to reduce the force for the purpose of saving a small sum of money; \$100,000 may seem a large sum, but when we consider that it is to build up in this country a force necessary to protect its honour, and to form the nucleus of a great national militia, I do think it is the duty of the Government to provide sufficient funds to keep the force already enrolled in active existence.

Mr. Campbell then ventilated a grievance felt by Capt. Coogan of the 24th Battalion, as to the care of arms for his company; and Mr. Ellis read from the camp reports to show that there had evidently in many cases been a lack of proper precaution to secure the health and comfort of those in camp. He did not want, he said, to find fault with the Minister of Militia, for whom he had usually quite an admiration for the way he carries on the service, but he thought the Minister should see that the officers who have charge of the camps should take all proper precautions.

THE RIFLE ASSOCIATIONS.

When the item of grants to rifle associations was proposed Mr. Davin made an earnest appeal on behalf of the associations in the North-west Territories, where there is no militia. He thought the Government should give them encouragement at least by lending them rifles. In reply Sir Adolphe Caron said: The great difficulty in dealing with rifle associations is that the association must be under the absolute control of the Department of Militia. Otherwise in every village in the Dominion there would be applications for rifles for the purpose of organizing rifle

associations which would not be under the control of the Department. I should feel disposed to lend the rifles; but, as the law now exists, I consider I have no power to do so. The Militia Act makes it imperative that the arms shall only be placed in the hands of an organized force under the absolute control of the Department of Militia. If we were to lend our rifles to one civilian organization, any other civilian association would have the right to apply to us and claim the same privilege. I have taken particular interest in the organization to which the hon. gentleman refers. I know their members are good shots, and that they have shown great zeal and energy in forming these associations; but, unfortunately, I am tied down by the regulations for the administration of my Department. However, I am prepared to take up the matter, and to see if by any possibility we could not, by associating these rifle associations with some military organization in the district, find the means of providing them with arms. I cannot say how much I would like to meet the views of the hon. gentleman in regard to this. I think we cannot develop too much the practice of rifle shooting in this country, and anything which will encourage it should receive the consideration of the Government.

Mr. Brien bespoke aid for a rifle association in his constituency, Essex county, Ontario. He also favoured annual drill of all corps, and added: "As to the efficiency of the rural battalions, I may say that the one in the county of Essex, the 21st Battalion, is second to none in the Dominion. The Colonel deserves a great deal of credit for the care he has taken of the corps, and he does everything in his power to promote the welfare of the battalion, and certainly feels very proud of it. His officers and men are alike efficient and the county feels proud of the battalion." Mr. Watson then put in a plea on behalf of the 91st and 95th Battalions, and requested a camp drill for the rural corps of Manitoba.

THE ALLOWANCES FOR DRILL.

LIEUT.-COL. TYRWHITT.—My idea of the best way to assist the different rifle associations would be to incorporate them with the militia, and allow the rifle associations who wish to enjoy the same benefits that are enjoyed by the militia to join the force. With regard to the remarks made by some hon. members as to the best means of protecting the volunteers from damp during their residence at the annual camps, I would say that in my experience flooring, such as was provided a good many years ago, would be much preferable for the annual camps. It could be put in store and used for a good many years, and not only would it protect the volunteers from damp but would afford a better flooring for them, even in dry weather. The hon. gentleman, no doubt with the very best intent, has recommended straw to protect volunteers from damp. In my experience that is one of the very worst things that can be selected, for the reason that it requires to be changed every day, whereas the floor would be permanent and last a great number of years. I must also dissent from the remarks of the hon. member for Muskoka, (Col. O'Brien) with regard to reducing the allowance to company officers. I consider that the company officers require all they get, and I would prefer rather to see the amount increased than diminished. It would be necessary that the allowance to commanding officers should also be reduced, from the fact that they receive an allowance for every efficient company. I believe that rule would hold good in all the higher grades. We know that the captains of companies have a great deal to do, and in addition to drilling their men, we know that they have many ways of disposing of their money, and this small allowance which they receive goes but a little way in providing the men with proper uniforms. I entirely agree with what has been said by several hon. members as to the desirability of drilling the corps oftener than at present. It is impossible to keep men in an efficient state when they only meet once in two or three years, and I hope that some means can be devised by which rural corps can go into camp oftener in the future than they have done in the past.

PERMANENT CORPS COMMISSIONS.

The appropriation for the Military College being called Sir Richard Cartwright asked if it was the fact that a couple of gentlemen who had failed to pass their examinations as cadets at the Royal Military College had been appointed to commissions in the permanent corps. Sir Adolphe Caron answered that one had been appointed to the permanent militia and another to the North-West Mounted Police. He pointed out that the possession of a R. M. C. certificate was not an essential for such appointees, and such being the case the fact that a gentleman had once failed at that institution should not bar his appointment provided he was otherwise a fit person for the position. While disposed to give all encouragement possible to the cadets, he thought we should not leave the rest of the militia in the cold altogether.

The appropriation of \$484,000 for the permanent forces passed without comment, it being then past midnight, and only a small remnant of the parliamentary forces lingering in the chamber.