

is not a service rifle and is not fit and safe to use in the Canadian army if it were necessary to use it. I make that statement here and accept full responsibility for it. I make it upon the report which I hold of those who are competent to advise me as to matters of that kind. I shall read the particulars necessary to show that of those rifles which are not now serviceable there is not one which cannot be made serviceable with a very slight expenditure. Yet we have this hon. gentleman trying to terrify the militia, trying to persuade the House that we have purchased 52,000 rifles which are only fit to be placed on the scrap heap. I assure you there is not one word of truth in it.

Mr. WORTHINGTON. The Auditor General said it.

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. The Auditor General did not say it—and the Auditor General, anyway, is about as good an authority as the hon. gentleman himself upon the usefulness of a rifle. I would ask the House to consider with me one or two questions that I propose to put to myself. First, what justification was there for adopting the policy of securing a rifle manufactory for Canada? I propose, in that connection, to read two or three short extracts from the proceedings of the Colonial, or Imperial Conference as it is now called, or 1907. I have here a paper which was laid before that conference, having been brought down by the Secretary of State for War. I shall quote from it briefly, giving only the salient words of each paragraph:

"1. No review of the strategical conditions of the British Empire, even when such a review is limited to the purely military aspects of the question, can be undertaken without admitting as a first and fundamental principle that the maintenance of the empire rests primarily upon supremacy at sea.

2. The second great principle which must govern the military organization of the empire is that each portion of it should, as far as possible, maintain sufficient troops for self defence.

3. The third principle to be borne in mind is this consideration of the military requirements of the empire is the great one of mutual support at the time of emergency. It is evident that under certain circumstances the land forces of the various territories of the empire may be impelled by considerations both of safety and sentiment to act together in some great conflict which may imperil our national existence. Should such a situation arise it would be impossible to overrate the advantage of having in every case a system of military organization capable of being readily assimilated to that of the many other contingents which would compose the Imperial army."

Under the heading:

PATTERNS AND PROVISION OF EQUIPMENT AND STORES FOR COLONIAL FORCES.

It says:

"It is essential that the small arms supplied to any force which may have to act side by side with troops from the United Kingdom should fire the same ammunition as that supplied to the latter."

And again:

"It is most desirable that the area of supply of the warlike store under reference should be as wide as possible, and, therefore, the colonial governments should be urged to arrange for local manufacture and provision, rather than to rely on the resources of the United Kingdom."

It seems to me, taking the highest point of view, that we have in that paper evidence that it was the duty of this country to undertake to manufacture for itself the small arms required by it. The hon. gentleman (Mr. Worthington), in a sneering way, referred to the alleged fact that the right hon. the Prime Minister had refused to contribute to the imperial navy. The hon. gentleman did not say whether he himself would be prepared to advocate the voting of a large sum of money to support the navy. We on this side of the House have taken the view that it is our duty in Canada to assist the mother country, as least to the extent of being able, in the first instance to defend ourselves on our own soil; and we have taken a further step, and said to the mother country that we do not wish her over-burdened tax-payers any longer to pay for supporting garrisons in Canada, and that we in future, as we are doing today, will continue to relieve her from all expenditures of that kind; and while we are not able at the present moment to construct a navy, and while we are not disposed to pay any money to support a navy, in the control of which we have no direct interest, we are prepared to do our full duty as far as concerns maintaining control of our own territory and being able to defend that territory. One of the ways in which to do that is to be prepared to manufacture for ourselves our own small arms. This is the first step then, Mr. Speaker, and the first ground I give in justification of the policy which we have adopted.

In February of last year, on a similar occasion to this, I made a statement, and I shall trouble the House by reading very briefly from that statement to show other reasons which moved me and which influenced the government to undertake the responsibility of manufacturing our own small arms or having them manufactured in this country. Let me tell him that in the year 1900, when this government wanted to purchase rifles through the imperial government, it was impossible to secure a thou-