

Has any step been taken on that direction, or is that recommendation to be acted upon?

The MINISTER OF MILITIA AND DEFENCE. No steps have been taken in that direction, and I do not feel at liberty to discuss the matter until the policy of the government with reference to it has been settled. It is no harm, however, for me to say that there is a good deal of inconvenience resulting from the fact that the work for the Militia Department is being done by the Department of Public Works. The same condition of things existed for many years in the Department of Marine and Fisheries, and, I think while Sir Charles Hibbert Tupper was minister, or perhaps earlier, a change was made by which the Department of Marine and Fisheries did their own work of constructing lighthouses and so on. There would certainly be many advantages in having the work done by the Militia Department itself.

Mr. INGRAM. As I understand, these armouries are for the purpose of keeping the arms and accoutrements in a proper state. I notice that at page 41, the Major General commanding reports:

So soon as district staff adjutants are appointed to all the military districts, more frequent inspections of the arms and equipment of rural companies should be made, and this would minimize the risk of deterioration; but I strongly recommend that, to make inspections more effective, a thoroughly qualified armourer should form part of the staff of each military district, who should accompany the staff officer at all inspections.

Have these district staff adjutants been appointed?

The MINISTER OF MILITIA AND DEFENCE. No.

Mr. INGRAM. Have the armourers been appointed?

The MINISTER OF MILITIA AND DEFENCE. I believe there are qualified armourers in nearly all, if not all, the military districts.

Mr. INGRAM. May I ask if the district staff adjutant for military district No. 1 has been appointed?

The MINISTER OF MILITIA AND DEFENCE. That is the London district? No.

Mr. OLIVER. What arrangement has been made for the taking care of the arms and accoutrements of the mounted rifles in the west?

The MINISTER OF MILITIA AND DEFENCE. So far as I know, they are under the control of the commanding officer.

Mr. OLIVER. Have any arrangements been made for the renting of a building to keep them in?

Mr. INGRAM.

The MINISTER OF MILITIA AND DEFENCE. No, there is a money allowance that is supposed to be sufficient to cover everything. As a matter of fact the captains have usually buildings of their own, and they are given lump sums of money for taking care of the buildings.

Mr. BARKER. I wish to call attention to the state of things that exists at Hamilton. We have there a battery of artillery and a regiment of infantry; and without boasting, I may say we are very proud of that battery and of that regiment. We think they are not exceeded in soldierly qualities by any other regiment or battery in the Dominion. A medical corps has lately been formed there, and during the short time it has been in existence we have had reason to feel equally proud of the commander and men of that corps. Not long since I was asked by the officer commanding to visit the quarters of the medical corps, and I am glad to be able to say, to the credit of the Militia Department, that the medical and surgical equipment provided there by the government was a credit to this country. I do not profess to be able to judge myself of such matters, but I express the opinion of gentlemen who are competent to judge. Nothing could be better, nothing could be more complete than the equipment provided by the minister. But, Sir, I was surprised, when asked to visit the quarters of that corps, to find that, instead of going to the drill shed and armoury, I had to go into the middle of the city, half a mile away from the armoury, and into the second story of a business block. Now I have a reason for bringing this matter before the minister. There are volunteers drilling night after night at this season, and practicing with heavy guns, and at any moment there may be a serious accident, and if an accident should occur it would be easier to get a dozen ordinary medical practitioners than to reach the medical corps at its quarters. I do not think that is right. I may say that I was even more astonished to learn that the quarters in which these valuable stores were kept were not provided by the Dominion of Canada, but by the officer commanding the corps and at his own expense. I think that is not credible to this Dominion. I make these remarks with reference to what the minister has said as to the providing of accommodation not being entirely within his control. The Minister of Public Works, I believe, as things go at present, has to be consulted in all such matters. I do not know whether the Minister of Militia and Defence has any control over the 40,000 rifles that he has spoken of, but if he has not, I think he ought to apply to the Major General for a permit to take one of those rifles with a bayonet, and poke up the Minister of Public Works to compel him to provide us with proper accommodation at Hamilton for the medical corps. Accidents might very possibly