

Mr. MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, I might premise by saying that the rules, of which we heard so much last year, apparently need to be conned over by the men who made them, and somewhat carefully, because it is rather difficult for ordinary members to know how they can bring matters before the House which they have a right to do.

I have brought this particular subject to the attention of the House by reason of the fact that there has appeared in the press of the country, at various times during the last three weeks, statements to the effect that, owing to certain new regulations that have been imposed by the National Rifle Association, the men who won their places last year at the Dominion rifle competition in Ottawa which entitled them to go to Bisley to represent Canada in this competition were not likely to be able to go this year. I regard that as a matter of very great importance. The interest which has been evoked in Canada generally during the past eight or nine years in rifle shooting has been very great, and I am sure that every one who is interested in the development of that particular line of work or sport, whichever view may be taken of it, would like to see the successes which have been achieved by Canadian riflemen at Bisley during the past few years repeated. Anything which would interfere with our riflemen being represented at this national British meeting would be a matter of very great importance.

In looking into this question I find that the constitution of the National Rifle Association of Great Britain involves the recognition of the fact that it is not an association purely for Great Britain and Ireland, but that it is a national one in the true sense, that it is an association where the Dominions over the seas which form a part of this empire to-day have as much right in all respects in reference to the membership of that association and in all the competitions that take place under it as the men who happen to reside within the narrow bounds of the island of Great Britain.

That being so, we recall that on various occasions during the past five or six years there have been objections of a technical character emanating from different sources which might be said to be pin pricks and intended to harass the men from this country who happened to use a rifle which you may say both Governments in Canada have adopted and ratified as being the national arm of Canada. I refer to the Ross rifle. Some years ago, when our men went over

there and with the use of that arm won the greatest prizes that are offered in competition, there followed immediately afterwards technical objections of the narrowest kind, and an attempt was made to introduce into the regulations conditions which were annoying and peculiar and evidently emanated from some source which was deliberate in its character, intended to interfere with the use of that arm by the Canadian riflemen. The action which was taken by the Government of that day, and the action which was taken afterwards by the present Government, when another question arose a little later, was of a vigorous character, and resulted in the recognition by the rifle authorities of the mother country of the Ross rifle as being the arm, which, in the hands of our riflemen, had a perfect right to be used in the competitions there.

A few years ago a great question arose in this country, and in England as well, in all military circles, as to the adoption of the aperture sight in connection with the rifle that was used in rifle shooting. The Small Arms Commission, which sat here in the Dominion of Canada as the result of their appointment by the Militia Department, went into that question with the greatest possible care and decided upon a certain sight which was adopted by the department. This sight was attached to the rifle which is now the national arm. In England the same question was taken up, and the War Office came to the conclusion that on another new rifle, which has not yet been issued but the technique of which has been decided upon, this aperture sight should also be used. In the United States, where rifle development has gone a long way for a great number of years, this aperture sight has been ratified by the military authorities and has become of permanent adoption in their military system.

As I am advised in regard to this matter, a sudden development takes place in England. The new rifle has not yet been issued, but the War Office has intimated that in certain competitions, the best competitions that take place at Bisley, such as the competition for the King's prize, which is the premier prize of all that riflemen from all parts of the empire are anxious to win as a matter of special distinction, no rifle shall be used that is provided with this aperture sight. The question is: What is to be the attitude of the Department of Militia and Defence in regard to this subject at this time? All our