

Important requirements of our system of defence.

**THE MINISTER OF MILITIA AND DEFENCE.** I think I should state, and I forgot to state this, that there is a company now which has approached the government with the view of establishing an arsenal at the city of Ottawa if they can make a contract for the supply of a considerable amount of ammunition.

Hon. Mr. TISDALE. I would not commit myself to the city of Ottawa, but I am glad to hear that it is to be in Ontario. The place it should be located would be a matter, I presume, that the hon. minister and the Major General would be largely responsible for, but it is a matter that requires very careful consideration and therefore I am not prepared to commit myself to any opinion upon it on short notice. I will say, however, that it should be somewhere well west in Ontario. I am very glad to hear that the hon. gentleman is making some progress in that regard. I do not propose to discuss the details of these different matters now because we will be able when we come to consider them in detail to procure information which the hon. minister has supplied in his remarks. The most important matter of all to be considered is the establishment of these auxiliary forces. The hon. gentleman and the government must be seized fully of the responsibility they are undertaking in asking for very large sums. That parliament will grant them I have no doubt. The proposal of the government commits us to these expenditures for years. It is a new departure and is a scheme which at every step should be most carefully considered because those who follow it will be committed to it, and there are many mistakes in regard to it that are very easily committed to them. This is not a very easy thing compared with what we are doing presently; that is the only point of material for the militia. The question of how it is to be evolved and how it is to be maintained. The auxiliary forces are a new thing. Nearly all of them will be composed of paid men because those who are doing the duties of their positions are called upon to do so. The problem of the militia is a very different one. Our citizen militia are called upon to make the most of their time and what it is that they are doing is efficient with the militia services. We are going to have a militia which is not the difficult one and that is not the man's difficulty now. I call attention to this because I am not satisfied with some of the remarks of the hon. gentleman's proposal. The reasons which I will give the hon. gentleman presently. I am not saying that I am at all

prepared to oppose this vote or to oppose this proposal. It is my hon. friend who takes the responsibility, but I want him to be seized of the difficulty of the problem which is to raise and keep up even the skeleton. If you call 40,000 men a skeleton, and to get the reserve and keep it. Without this we will simply be wasting the money. We had better accept the doctrine of the third member for Labelle (Mr. Roussin) that we should only provide a police force and put ourselves at the mercy of any country that wishes to step in. I cannot accept that doctrine. I have been brought up in a different school. I believe that what is worth having is worth fighting for. You do not look to see what your chances are if you are a man. You will stand up any way and if you are going to lose your life you will do it in defence of what is worth fighting for. I congratulate the hon. minister on his courage at all events because it requires courage to come down and ask for this large expenditure. It requires still greater courage to admit that this is not for this year only. He has presented it in a way that is proper in such matters as this. I want to call his attention to the fact that this is laying down a wide foundation financially. The people will hold him and his colleagues accountable for it or they will give them credit for it, but the earliest part of the problem is to get the money and to spend it. The difficult problem I am coming to, and it is more than the question of the pay of the militia. Last year the hon. minister promised us a reserve sufficient to make a total of 100,000 men. I will come to that presently. He gave us to-day what I think was a rather optimistic statement of the result of this year's camp and of the state of the militia. The ranks of city regiments have always been and are filled. They have advantages in a way. At the same time you see what the Major General said; a good deal has to be learned to prepare them for the field. The difficulty with them is the counterpart of what it is with the rural corps. They can drill and assemble together in their drill halls as often as they please, but unless they go away and do some general work they would have a hard time of it if they were turned out suddenly. That can be mended without any great difficulty, but something or other is the matter with the rural militia or else figures and numbers do not speak correctly. My attention was called to this, though I had thought of it before, more strikingly by the remarks of the hon. member for Haldimand and Monck (Mr. Thompson). Let me say to him that it is very gratifying to find a young member of our government, with our strong party affiliations, standing up in the way he did and expressing his views as a soldier and as a member of parliament at the same time. He stated what probably some persons might think very unpleasant truths in regard to the militia. I commend him for it and I paid