

tically applied, and their existence is calculated to give a delusive character to the power of defence possessed by the Dominion.

The time seems to have arrived when a fresh inquiry should be made into the working of the Militia Act, in order to ascertain how far it has provided an organization capable of adapting itself to ever-changing conditions and increasing responsibilities. Such an inquiry would furnish a fresh starting point and firm ground for those who are called upon to guide the policy of the Dominion on the question of the defence of its territory.

I asked the Minister of Militia, a few moments ago, and I do not think I properly understood the answer he gave, whether it was the intention of the Government to increase the militia force in this country. I understood him to say that new companies would be formed only when other companies had been disbanded. Am I correct in that?

Mr. PATTERSON (Huron). As the hon. gentleman will see from the character of the Estimates, it is not the present intention to increase the militia force.

Mr. DAVIN. I wish to ask the Minister of Militia, whether he will lend rifles to the volunteer rifle associations in the North-west Territories? We have no militia in the North-west Territories, but we may at any time be exposed to considerable danger. We have rifle associations at all the centres of population, and I need hardly tell you that these men who compose these associations, are not in a position to buy rifles themselves. These men band themselves together in these associations, go out regularly to practice, and have competed with rifle associations all over the Dominion, in some cases successfully, and it would be conducive to the cheap protection of the country that the Minister of Militia should supply them with arms. The hon. gentleman has in store large numbers of these rifles which are practically—I was going to say, but it would be too rhetorical—rotting away, and these arms should be utilized. My hon. friend from Norfolk (Mr. Charlton) has suggested that an improved arm should be given to the militia force. If that be done, as the Minister of Militia seems to indicate, there will be no use for these rifles now in store, so that it would be in accordance with the spirit of the Act, and it would be only justice to the people of the North-west, that he should lend these rifles to the associations. There are associations at Regina, Moose Jaw, Medicine Hat, Prince Albert, Edmonton, Battleford, Calgary and Macleod, and the number of rifles required would not be many. They are not necessarily very bloated organizations; but I may say that the military spirit in the North-west is as active as in any part of Canada, if not more active. The exigencies of a pioneer life do not leave them that plethora of wealth that may belong to some of the volunteer associations in other parts of Canada, and I hope my hon. friend will do what he can in this direction.

Mr. PATTERSON (Huron). If I find that there is a surplus in store, and that the regu-

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lations will permit of my doing so, I shall be charmed to comply with the request of my hon. friend from West Assiniboia.

Mr. HUGHES. On the second page of the Major-General's Report, I notice the following statement:—

The Imperial Government has expressed its willingness to confer medals, for long service and good conduct, on non-commissioned officers and men of the permanent force, under conditions similar to those governing such rewards in the regular army.

I would like to ask the hon. Minister of Militia if he has taken any steps to have this honour conferred on the soldiers of the active militia who are not of the permanent force?

Mr. PATTERSON (Huron). Yes. We are in communication with the Imperial authorities, through the High Commissioner, on that subject.

Mr. BAIN (Wentworth). I would like to emphasize the question raised by the hon. member for North Norfolk (Mr. Charlton), with respect to supplying the militia force with a better class of arms for shooting purposes. The officers of the militia in my riding complain of the arms at present supplied to the force, and one of them has written to me, asking me to urge the Government to supply a better class of arms for shooting purposes than those at present supplied, which, I understand, are practically lying idle in store. If we are to have a militia service at all, I think it should be made as effective as possible.

Mr. LISTER. Is it the intention of the Government to continue the system of allowances to militia officers?

Mr. PATTERSON (Huron). That may be necessary. Owing to the short time that I have been at the head of the department, it may be necessary to continue that system for the present year; but I intend to discontinue it, so that the exact amount of the salary of each officer shall be seen in the Estimates from year to year.

Mr. LISTER. What do you propose to substitute?

Mr. PATTERSON (Huron). A fixed salary.

Sir RICHARD CARTWRIGHT. Does the hon. Minister refer to the \$40 which is usually allowed to the captain of each company? Is it proposed to abolish that?

Mr. PATTERSON (Huron). No. I understood the hon. member for West Lambton (Mr. Lister) to refer to the allowances to officers at headquarters.

Mr. LISTER. No. I would call the hon. gentleman's attention to this statement in the Annual Report of the Department for the year ending 31st December, 1891:

The system, under which allowances are now granted to the Rural Militia, is open to very serious objections. Allowances are drawn annually for "drill instruction," and for "care of arms," for which the country