

it is a righteous retribution that a member of the same government which was guilty of such criminal negligence—to say nothing more—in the beginning of this stupendous transaction should be the one to pronounce here in the House his apologia, and at the same time his condemnation of the work of his predecessors.

Motion agreed to, and the House went into Committee of Supply.

SUPPLY

Militia and Defence—allowance active militia, \$112,000.

Hon. SAM. HUGHES (Minister of Militia). In introducing the militia estimates, perhaps I may be permitted a word of general explanation. I have largely followed, as necessarily was the case, the estimates as prepared by my predecessor in office. In order to facilitate the discussion and give every member of the House the fullest opportunity of looking into the details of these estimates, I had a statement prepared giving the estimates with explanations, and a copy of this has been sent to every member of the House. On this first item, there is an increase of \$2,000. This is due to a new corps having been formed and an increase in the establishment of other corps. Requests have come in from various parts of the country to increase these establishments and this has been done to this extent.

Mr. CARVELL. I do not know whether it is set forth in this memorandum or not, but I believe it is a fact that in this item is included the allowances made to the commandants of different regiments of infantry. Does the minister allow anything to the commanding officer for care of arms and accoutrements in places where there is an armoury with a caretaker in charge? If not, does not the hon. minister think that the commanding officer who becomes responsible for this property should have something in the way of an allowance, even though he does not have to do the actual work of cleaning and caretaking? I have been told by officers of the militia they are responsible for losses when stock is taken every year, even though the losses may be due to the negligence of the caretaker, and, as I understand it, the commanding officer has no way of getting his own out of the caretaker. He must make good to the government but, unfortunately, there is nobody to make good to him. I may be wrong in my understanding of the case, but if I am right, does not the hon. minister think that this state of affairs involves injustice?

Mr. FOSTER (N. Toronto).

Mr. HUGHES (Victoria, Ont.). The hon. gentleman (Mr. Carvell) has stated the case exactly. The allowance for care of arms varies from \$40 for a small unit, to \$170 for a field battery. Where there is an armoury provided by the government, only half the allowance is made. The commanding officer of a corps provided with a government armoury and caretaker receives no allowance, and most of the artillery corps and many others are now provided with caretakers. I heartily agree that the claim to consideration of the officer responsible who has to pay out of his own pocket for efficiency in these stores though, in many cases, he has no direct control of the caretaker, should be recognized. There has been no change in this item; we are taking it exactly as it has been. But I may say it is our intention, if we can get an officer in command of a district to recommend to us a proper caretaker—and our first requisite is that he shall be a soldier properly qualified—to appoint that man. We will have the officer in command, in more or less direct control of the caretaker. The matter of pay or allowance has not been considered, because we have not had time. I know from personal and other experience that there is a great deal of justice in the statement the hon. gentleman has made.

Mr. CARVELL. I am sorry the hon. minister has not taken time in some instances to make inquiries before he made dismissals of these caretakers. I wish to call attention to a case coming under my own observation. In the armoury in the town in which I live, ever since its construction it has been presided over by a gentleman who was a militiaman, a soldier, as my hon. friend (Mr. Hughes, Victoria, Ont.) says, and who later became an officer in the artillery.

I got from the Militia Department all sorts of criticism, in fact I was looked upon almost as an outlaw in military ethics, in recommending this gentleman as caretaker, I think they call him superintendent, of the 10th Field Battery. But I took the ground that the man who was responsible for the care of arms and accoutrements of the field battery ought to be a man who knew something about a field battery; I do not care whether he is an officer or not, he ought to have some knowledge of field batteries, and, therefore, he was appointed. But unfortunately he was a Liberal, and I think that one of the first official acts of my hon. friend was to remove that gentleman from his position. Now he says, we want a soldier. What have they got? A man who runs a billiard hall, and I do not know what else he does.