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THE MILITIA IN PARLIAMENT.

Major Sam. Hughes has at the outset of his parliamentary career made an excellent beginning in the matter of formally calling the attention of the authorities to the necessities of the militia force and to glaring defects in the system. On the 30th ult., in accordance with notice given, he moved in the House of Commons for a return showing the following:—

1. The corps of the Active Militia of Canada that have been drilled (*a*) annually, (*b*) biennially, (*c*) triennially, in the period 1889-1891 inclusive. 2. The number of qualified combatant officers in each corps. 3. The number of provisionally appointed officers in each corps, specifying those whose period for qualification has expired. 4. The name, length of service and age of each commanding officer upwards of sixty years of age. 5. The actual strength of, and number of enlistments in, during the year 1891, each of the permanent corps, located in Ontario, Quebec and New Brunswick.

Speaking in explanation of his motion he presented a strong array of facts showing the necessity for a remodelling of the existing arrangements. The schools, and the permanent corps in connection with them, came in for special criticism, timely and forcible. Major Hughes did not by any means contend that the schools have not served a useful purpose; on the contrary he gave them great credit for the useful instruction imparted to the comparative few who have attended them. He dwelt, however, upon the enormous cost of these institutions, amounting to \$1,200 for each certificate granted, emphasizing the point that the educational facilities afforded are practically the only return received for the immense outlay on the school corps, their value as a standing army being nothing. He pointed out that the courses are not held at the time most suitable, that the dress requirements are such that the needless expense they

involve prevents many officers from attending, and that so limited is the living accommodation at the schools that they could not possibly take in all who by regulation should attend, as only about one-third of the present officers of the force have the prescribed qualification. He advocated a return to the old system, under which all attended the schools as cadets, and were granted certificates according to merit, without reference to the rank held at the time in the militia. These cadets wore a simple, inexpensive uniform, and the accommodation was never overtaxed, as they did not live in barracks but found their own quarters in the town.

Major Hughes made a strong plea for annual drills for the rural corps as well as the rest of the force, and he proceeded to show how even the time now spent biennially in camp is largely wasted or misapplied, because of the incompetence of some commanding officers, and the nature of the exercises often prescribed by the camp commandants. As a sample of the absurdities witnessed he instanced the common practice of putting companies of healthy, vigorous young men, morning after morning of the brief camping period, through the extension motions, for the good of their health! The common violation of the regulation respecting the retirement of officers who have passed the age limit was referred to, and Major Hughes urged that this should be strictly enforced in the future.

The debate was continued by Lt.-Col. O'Brien, who expressed views quite contrary to those of Major Hughes on the school system and the use of the time now spent in camp, but joined him in advocacy of annual drills for the whole force. This he held to be something that should be pressed for to the exclusion of everything else, until granted by the Government. In conclusion Col. O'Brien

made a most unlooked for attack upon the Royal Military College. He said:—

“We really get no good from the college, never have got any good from it, and from present appearances we are not likely to derive any benefit from it. That college should be brought more in harmony with the needs of the force. It is an admirable school, no doubt, and if I had a son I would send him to it, but it is not an institution which is of any particular benefit to the force. I do not know a dozen men in the active force at present who were educated at the military college. I wish we could get them, but unfortunately we cannot. I have suggested a means by which the military college might be brought into harmony with the active force, but I was told that nothing could be done because it would interfere with the examinations. If that is the case, then it is merely an educational institution for the benefit of the public, and if so, it ought not to be charged to the active militia.”

There is no doubt that the Royal Military College is of immense value as an educational institution, apart from the strictly military features of its course, but we fancy that Col. O'Brien will find few persons informed as to the facts to agree with him that the militia get no good from the college. And an examination of the Militia List will show him the names of very many graduates now holding positions of great influence and usefulness in the force.

After Lt.-Col. Amyot and Lt.-Col. Denison had spoken, each strongly advocating annual drill, and a return to the old system of cadet classes, the Minister of Militia replied, and the importance of this first official utterance of Col. Bowell as to his intended administration of his new department warrants us in reproducing his remarks in full. He said:—

There can be no possible objection to laying before the House the information sought for in this resolution. I frankly confess that I am fully in accord with a good many of the suggestions which have