

tants it was highly important to organise forces in those Territories, and they were organised; but I think now they may be allowed to die out, and I ask Parliament to let them die out. Nothing of that kind said he, but he did it. He says there was another difficulty. Why were they not furnished with uniforms? He says: There was another Minister who preceded him and who discharged the duties of his office with greater ability than he could pretend to. There are some things in which we are inclined to agree with the hon. gentleman, and that is one. He says that his predecessor found that there was a difficulty in those days. He wanted a little time to consider what the proper form of uniform should be in the North-West. It is a peculiar country, where the climate is severe, where it is very hot in the summer, and I am told that it is a little cold in the winter, where the country is a little difficult and the distances may be great, and he wanted to find out what uniform would be the proper one in the North-West; and this practical question, which might have been settled, I should think, by enquiry of those mounted men who have been doing duty under the charge of another Department of the same Government for some years, by enquiry as to the views held in reference to the situation of the troops on the other side of the line in a somewhat similar climate, discharging somewhat similar duties—this was another great branch of the North-West militia question; and it has taken the hon. gentleman and his predecessor from 1879 to 1885 to find how the troops should be clothed. Well, he has had to settle it experimentally and in a hurry, in the middle of a war. He nods assent. Is it not a pity that they did not have a mimic war some years before.

Mr. CARON. Your friends tried to get it up.

Mr. BOWELL. You had it here.

Mr. BLAKE. I did not hear of it; but, if so, it adds to the culpability of the hon. gentleman, because with that danger staring him in the face, and being charged with the peace and protection of the country, and believing, as I suppose he did, as he has said so, that the people were trying to get up a war before, still the clothing of the North-West militia is too great a question for him to grapple with. The tailor's question—the question of the cut of the clothes of the men—all these questions were so difficult, and required so much time to solve, that it was necessary that the forces he organised in 1879 should languish and die as an organised force before his great mind could successfully grapple with the question. He says there was another great difficulty—even if I could have grappled with this question, I could not have handled it, any way, because you refused to vote me the money. I am prepared to defend every vote I have given, every speech I have made on the subject of the militia of this country. When the hon. gentleman condescends to particulars, as I now challenge him to do, either now, if he wills, or when his departmental estimates are before the House, if he wills, when he wills and where he wills, I challenge him to the speech or to the vote which will justify his statement in this matter. I speak for myself; my friends will speak for themselves; he made a personal attack and a personal charge upon me, and declared that my speeches and my votes were of a character that, he said, no man who loved his country would engage in at such a crisis. He was disorderly in making that statement, but I did not call him to order for it. I repudiate the charge, I hurl it in the hon. gentleman's face, I deny it to his teeth. I say the criticisms I have administered to his militia estimates, such as they were, I am prepared to stand by, to reiterate, to defend and to repeat. I say, further, that the defence of the hon. gentleman is—I cannot use the word; I was about to say ignoble, but I understand that that word, from this side of the House, is out of order, so I do not use it—but I say his defence is unworthy of a Government. Here is a Government in

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power with a majority of two to one in Parliament. They bring down the estimates for the public service of the country which they say are adequate to the discharge of that public service. They are bound by their oaths of office, they are bound by their duty to the country, they are bound by the power with which their country has entrusted them, to call upon the representatives of the people in Parliament assembled for such supplies as are necessary to carry on the public business efficiently, for such supplies as are necessary to protect the public peace and secure good order in the land. That is their bounden, their plain, their obvious, their sworn duty. And the hon. gentleman tells me—what? Not that he brought down a large vote, which was rejected; not that he brought down a large vote which, a combination of the Opposition and of his own followers prevented him from carrying. He says: I brought down too small votes because I, the Minister of War, at the head of a force twice as numerous as that opposed to me, was afraid of the criticism of the Opposition. The Minister of War, with all the power, with all the patronage, with all the grandeur of his position, and sustained by forces twice as large as those opposed to him, sustained by drilled and organised battalions, which fill one side of this House, spread over to the other, and almost crowd our feeble force out of the chamber, knowing that his public duty called on him to bring down large estimates to Parliament, abnegated his duty, was false to his oath, was unfaithful to his trust, and brought down small estimates, inadequate to the discharge of his duty, and rendering the country insecure. That is the hon. gentleman's statement. Now he says: I turn round, I, with my power, I, with my organised battalions, I, with my numerous forces, I, with the control of the Treasury, I, with all in my hand to do what I please, and with my sworn duty to do it, my defence for my abnegation of my duty is that I was afraid of what the Opposition would say. Is it really so? Is it because the Minister of Militia was afraid of the criticism of the Opposition that he did not bring down the necessary estimates? For, Sir, every shilling that the hon. gentleman asked from Parliament had been voted. But with reference to the particular estimate which we are now dealing with—I refer to the estimate for uniforms—unless my memory greatly deceives me, I do not believe that there was a criticism in this Parliament or in the last Parliament hostile to the amount of that vote. On the contrary, unless my memory greatly deceives me, it leads me to the impression that more than once hon. gentlemen on this side of the House—I think I will say my hon. friend from Elgin (Mr. Casey), amongst them—have pointed out the necessity of improving the equipment, of improving some portions of the uniform of the volunteers.

Mr. CARON. Buttons.

Mr. BLAKE. The hon. gentleman has a soul above buttons, I observe, looking as straight as I can before me. But I do not think that we discussed the subject of buttons. And I recollect something more, with that memory which the hon. gentleman says is so unfaithful, and which he is so little disposed to trust, I think I recollect a discussion on the subject of head gear, and I think my hon. friend from Lambton (Mr. Fairbank) pointed out what ought to be done in that way, and I think I recollect my hon. friend from Elgin speaking on the equipments, and calling the hon. gentleman's attention to that. I think I shall be able, when that challenge to which I referred is met, to show the hon. gentleman—although I speak only for myself—I shall be able to show him that suggestions were made from this side of the House that more should be done in the nature of an equipment for the volunteers than the hon. gentleman himself proposed. But, Sir, if it were as the hon. gentleman has alleged, this is certainly a humiliating position for a powerful Government to stand in, that their defence for not doing