

Canadian militia, while it may appeal to the pride of our people, I must say I do not regard as a great majority of the Canadian public do. Weak as some of the general officers commanding may have been, unfit as some of them undoubtedly were, nevertheless I feel that, taking them all in all, they have done possibly much more good than would have been done if we had selected our commanding officers from the ranks of our militia. There is nothing to prevent an officer of the Canadian militia, qualifying himself for the position by becoming an officer in the imperial army; and I am satisfied that if, for instance, Sir Percy Girouard, should be sent out by the imperial government to Canada as general officer in command, there is not a Canadian in any province who would not welcome his advent. Feeling as I do the desirability of maintaining in every sense our imperial connection to the fullest extent, I do not like to see even this little link snapped asunder. I know that the law still allows the general officer commanding to be taken from the British army, and I trust that for many years to come he will continue to be taken from that army. But I regret that even theoretically, if not in practice, that little connecting link should be removed. I certainly trust that this new provision will be honoured in its breach rather than in its observance.

There is one very proper provision the hon. minister has made. A British officer of any rank on coming to Canada has always taken precedence of a Canadian officer of similar rank. There is no reason why a British major for instance, coming to Canada, should take precedence of a Canadian major, although the former may have been major only a couple of years and the latter be his senior. Let me point out that under the regulations in the Army Act of the imperial service, an officer in the militia of any of the colonies or even an officer in the English militia, if I am not mistaken—but at all events an officer in the colonial militia, should be placed side by side with an officer in the imperial troops, has to take juniority of rank. I would suggest to the hon. minister that he should not only have the change he proposes made in our Canadian law, but go a step further, and as he is a member of the Imperial Defence Committee—and I must congratulate him upon his appointment to that distinguished position—take such steps as will have this anomaly removed from the English law as well as ours. I shall not discuss the question of the position of the general officer commanding in Canada and that of the general officer commanding at Halifax, but it does seem a little anomalous that the general officer commanding in Canada should take a junior position as compared with the general officer commanding at Halifax, although the former may be the senior.

I must compliment the hon. minister on his proposal to increase the pay of the force all around. I am satisfied that this proposal will meet the approval of the people. But a most important question is the calling out of the troops in aid of the civil power. I would have been pleased to find the hon. minister proposing that our militia should never be called out in aid of the civil power. For years I have fought against their being turned out to do police guard in the municipalities and to put down riots, which very often are incited by aldermen and others seeking to gain votes. Young men, clerks in offices and stores, are compelled to leave their employment and do police work along the streets and around the warehouses of our towns, and have to endure the insults of every ruffian and blackguard who chooses to abuse them. While the parliament of Canada has authority to enact that certain magistrates should have the right to call out the militia, I very much question whether this parliament has the authority to provide that Montreal or Toronto shall pay for these soldiers when they are called out. I fail to see the connecting link between the parliament of Canada and the municipalities, and unless the provincial authorities choose to enact that these municipalities shall be responsible for the pay of the troops when called out, I have no hesitation in saying that the municipalities would be absolutely justified in refusing to pay a single dollar. I should like to see the hon. minister remove this anomaly from the law. We will search the English militia law in vain for any provision authorizing any man, from the King of England down, to call upon the English militiaman, as such, to suppress a riot. Our municipalities have sufficient authority for the suppression of riots without giving them the right to call out the militia. Any policeman on the streets of Montreal or the streets of Toronto can step up to any citizen, mayor, alderman or any other, and call upon them to act as special constable. If that is done, the municipality is responsible for it. With such a power, there should be no difficulty about maintaining law and order within the bounds of any municipality. We object, as militiamen, to be called out for police duty, especially when we are not given the powers of policemen. We dare not act as constables, nor dare we take any efficient action as soldiers, unless the disturbance takes the form of an absolute riot. I trust that the Minister of Militia will be good enough to allow us a few days for the consideration of this Bill before it is brought up for a second reading; and, I would like the hon. minister during that time to give serious consideration to the aspect of the case I have just referred to. And I hope he will remove entirely the cause which allows the militia force to be called out in support of the civil