

cate our men in the use of the rifle, I believe that we shall have in the very near future, a force which will be amply sufficient to protect this country against any ordinary trouble from within and, with the aid of the mother country, do its part in defending Canada from any attack from without.

I do not know that I have anything to add, but as the items go through I shall be most happy to give any information regarding any details.

At six o'clock committee took recess.

After Recess.

Committee resumed at eight o'clock.

Mr. MACLAREN (Huntingdon). In the remarks I have to make, Mr. Chairman, I wish to discuss the militia, more particularly as it concerns my own particular district. We have a frontier in the county of Huntingdon, adjoining the state of New York of some seventy miles. In 1862-3, as stated by my hon. friend from South Norfolk (Hon. Mr. Tisdale), quite an impetus was given the volunteer movement throughout the Dominion. The fever then ran high in Huntingdon as well as in many other parts of the Dominion, and we had a very good force of volunteer militia raised on the frontier at that time. In the county of Huntingdon we had thirteen companies of fifty-five men each which, in a population of 14,000 or 15,000, would give about a company to each 1,000 of the population. That, it will be admitted, was a very fair representation of the military spirit of that day. I was much pleased with the remarks of the hon. member for Haldimand and Monck (Mr. Thompson) in connection with the militia estimates last year. He proved to the House that he has given this question considerable study, and from his experience and study was in a position to speak with a good deal of authority on it. I have also had some experience in the matter. I joined the volunteers as a private in 1863, and served in the militia from that date until 1899—a period of twenty-six years. During the first four years I served as private and sergeant and was sergeant-major of a provisional regiment during the Fenian troubles of 1866. In the fall of 1866 the fiftieth battalion was formed, of which I was adjutant and drill instructor, and in 1889 I retired with the brevet rank of major. I have always taken a great deal of interest in the militia, and am therefore in a position to speak with some knowledge of the subject. As I look around the House this afternoon, I could not help thinking that if the number of members present was any indication of the military ardour of this Dominion, that spirit must be at a pretty low ebb. I counted some forty members present out of 200, and it seemed to me that if a similar spirit prevails in the country, there is not much hope of a very strong militia force being kept up. There is always a good deal of enthusiasm about

Hon. Mr. BORDEN (King's).

these matters when they are new. I remember that in my own county, no matter what work had to be done on the farm, we use to turn out in the evenings to attend drill, and that spirit was kept up pretty well in that part of the country until 1866, in which year we were out on active service for some months in connection with the Fenian troubles. In 1870 there were again rumours of a renewed attack from across the line, when we were again called out and had the good fortune as I suppose I may call it—to have a little brush with the Fenians at Trout river, so that we are privileged to have 'Trout river' on our colours. After that there were still talk of our friends opposite coming across the border, and our military spirit was kept up pretty well until 1877-8, when our military ardour seemed to cool off very much, and during the last few years I was connected with the battalion we had considerable difficulty in keeping the force up to such a position as we would have liked. I think we had the proper kind of men in that county and have them still. Out of fifty-five men in the company to which I belonged thirty-two were six foot and over, and while tall men may not be any better soldiers than short men, still they look better in the ranks. We have the same kind of men there now but they do not join our volunteer force.

Now, there are several reasons for that. I do not intend to deal with this question in the abstract, but simply to speak of matters as I find them in our own part of the country. We had in our county, as I say, the 50th and 51st—eight companies in each battalion. They do not all come from our county, but some from the adjoining county of Chateaugay. We had thirteen companies and one troop of cavalry in the county of Huntingdon. Since the time I spoke of, 1877 or 1878, it has seemed almost impossible to get the proper kind of men to join the volunteers or to remain in the ranks. The consequence is that the companies have fallen away until, at the last camp, I think out of sixteen original companies it was found impossible to get four full companies to go to camp at Laprairie. As I said, one of the reasons which has militated against securing proper recruits and which you may think is not a very commendable one—is that many of our people do not see the great necessity for keeping up the militia force. I think they are as loyal as the people in any other part of the Dominion. I think they would be as ready to turn out in the defence of their country as the people in any other part of the Dominion. But we are a practical people in the county of Huntingdon, and a people who like to attend to our work; and a good many do not see the necessity of keeping up the force and spending time and money in going to camp year after year. I may say that we never had as good a force in the county of Huntingdon as when we had drill at our company