

length of time the public accounts kept the report before them.

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. I am not responsible for the Public Accounts Committee. I was willing to have the question reported here long ago. No, the hon. gentleman (Mr. Worthington) is entirely responsible.

Mr. WORTHINGTON. The hon. minister did not bring down these reports until within the last two months.

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. Well, two months. Here is an hon. gentleman burning with a desire to save his country. He was lamenting over the dangers which beset the people of this country and especially the militia—and here he has allowed, according to his own statement, two months to pass during which he should have been on his feet with the kind of impassioned eloquence we heard to-day, warning the House and the Country of the terrible disaster awaiting them.

I do not propose to follow this line of argument any longer. The hon. gentleman has occupied three hours and a quarter, and I shall try not to emulate him in this respect at least. I propose in view of the seriousness of the resolution which is now before the House, to address myself to two or three points connected with this matter which I deem to be of importance. I do not, for a moment, intend to follow the hon. gentleman in his meanderings among the reports of all sorts of committees which are of more or less consequence—and generally of much less consequence than mine. However, before I take my seat, I shall refer specifically to the only three cases out of the whole number he has referred to in which the Ross rifle has been seriously attacked. And I propose to show that in each and all of these cases, the statement that any accident occurred, any blow out or anything that might have seriously menaced life, is absolutely without any foundation in fact. And I propose to do that by the record, and not by reading such papers as the hon. gentleman did, a paper the authority for which he could not state, purporting to be a report from the United States government as to the test of certain rifles from the Ross factory—

Mr. WORTHINGTON. If the hon. gentleman (Sir Frederick Borden) will pardon me. Somewhat like his little manicure rifle, he is going off at half-cock. This report came from the Springfield Armoury, and is signed by competent and creditable men, and they state that Sir Charles Ross was present and asked to have his rifle inspected.

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. I say that this House has no evidence before it beyond the hon. gentleman's statement, and—to return him the compliment that he paid me—

I do not value that statement one single particle; it is not good enough. Now, if the hon. gentleman is going to bring down ordinance reports, let him bring them down with the proper seal upon them, as has been done by the Militia Department in every case; every paper is there to speak for itself; and it bears upon its face the authority from which emanated. I do not come here, as the hon. gentleman did, with a typewritten paper which he tells us may have come from the Springfield Arsenal in the United States, but concerning which he has given us no proof that it came from there.

Mr. WORTHINGTON. Does the hon. gentleman deny the accuracy of the report?

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. I am not denying it or affirming it; I say that that paper has no business to be brought into this House, because the hon. gentleman is not able to say where it came from.

Mr. SAM HUGHES. I may say that the report of the Springfield committee on the Ross rifle is infinitely better than the Springfield report on their own rifle, as I shall show in due time.

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. I would like, at the earliest moment, to set the mind of the hon. gentlemen (Mr. Worthington) at rest with reference to the dangerous character of this rifle, which he so hates, and in connection with which he has become a sort of monomaniac; because he has done nothing else for two years, he has thought of nothing else, spoke of nothing else, apparently knows nothing else—and very little about that. But I want to make a statement at once, which I hope may have a soothing effect upon his mania, and that is that I will undertake to bring the evidence of men competent to judge to prove that there is not a single rifle which has been delivered and accepted by the Department of Militia from the Ross rifle factory—except the rifle which his friend tampered with at Eastman at a meeting at which the hon. gentleman was present and—

Mr. WORTHINGTON. I was not present; I was not within twenty miles.

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. The hon. gentleman said he was.

Mr. WORTHINGTON. I said I was in the vicinity.

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. He knew it had been tampered with, and did not like to go. I say that with the exception of that one rifle, which was tampered with in that way—and I will show in a few minutes what was done with that rifle so tampered with—there is not one single rifle of the 42,000 which have not been delivered that