

although we might prevent some hon. gentleman who is looking for a new position with a large salary at the country's expense from attaining his desire.

Section 32 which I ask to repeal, and for which I propose to substitute another clause, involves a very material change also. The present law vests in the Governor in Council power to make such 'orders as are necessary with respect to duties to be performed by the General Officer Commanding.' This new clause authorizes the Governor in Council to define the duties and authority of the General Officer Commanding. Under the present Militia Act the Orders in Council which are authorized to be made are only 'respecting the duties to be performed by the General Officer Commanding.' A most important difference and in my opinion is one of the greatest safeguards if properly carried out, against, the introduction of political influence into the militia. The present law hands over to the General Officer Commanding the command and discipline of the militia. It authorizes the Governor in Council to make orders as to the performance of his power. The high court of parliament have passed upon that, and the Governor in Council cannot override the action of parliament for an Act of parliament is above an Order in Council.

There has been very general discussion on the law and regulations governing our militia system, and in view of the lateness of the session I shall not enter into a further discussion, but shall refer those who wish to understand the subject to the records of the House. When the Minister of Militia first introduced this Bill, he told us that he would defer the consideration of it until he could consult the home authorities. Well, he did consult the home authorities, but since that consultation and since the introduction of this Bill this year very drastic changes have been made in it affecting the organization of our military system; changes far more important than those which the minister thought it well to consult the war officer about last year when he first introduced the Bill, and yet the hon. gentleman presses these charges this year after admitting yesterday that he had not consulted the Imperial authorities about them. Now as to the introduction of politics into the Canadian militia, it is admitted by the best authorities in the colonies as well as in Great Britain, that a cardinal principle in the perfection of a military organization is the exclusion of politics in every shape and form. Let me state here that I never knew or heard of the slightest attempt to introduce politics in any manner whatever into the administration of the Militia Department during the long years of the Conservative regime. In order that this statement of mine may be endorsed, I quote from the 'Military Gazette'; the following extracts from speeches delivered on September 19th.

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1899, at a banquet tendered by the Montreal Garrison at the Windsor Hotel to Sir Percy Girouard.

In reply to the toast of our guest, Sir Percy said:—

'Canada has as good a fighting machine as could be found in the world, but he would emphasize the fact that it should be free from political trammels. (Cheers.) The militia have perfect faith in their commanding officers, district officers commanding, and, above all, their general, who should rule with a perfectly free hand, which means and reads, success.

Hon. Dr. Borden said:

I have only been Minister of Militia for three years, and the militia forces of this country have been in existence for twenty-five years, but I think it is only due to the gentlemen who have preceded me that I should say that I do not believe that they have abused their positions in order to introduce politics. 'I say,' proceeded the Hon. Dr. Borden, 'that every battalion in the Dominion of Canada has been untrammelled in the selection of its officers. No man can say to you that the lieutenant-colonel of any battalion has been dictated to by the government at Ottawa. Will any one tell me that there has been gross abuses of this kind in Canada? I don't believe it. Of course, in the first instance, when the Canadian provinces, in 1868, felt the necessity for having a military force, and Sir George Cartier took the matter in hand, it was necessary to choose persons to take command who were not in the regular army. It was the best force that was available, and from that time the people have given their money and their time for the privilege of serving the flag of the country. That being the case, what was more natural than that the head of the department of the government should have had something to do with selection of the men who have been in command of the battalions. No doubt, that has been done, but it has not been done for the last twenty years, and there has been promotion from the lower grade to the higher grade officers in the regular course. There has been no gross abuse on the part of the 'civil head' in any branch of the service. I make this statement in justice to those who have been at the head of the department in the past—not for myself, for I have only had my present position for three years.'

I quote this in order to show the contrast between the administration of the militia under the Conservative regime, and the present unfortunate state of affairs.

The Minister of Militia claims that for the old system he has substituted his new plan of a military council, based on the British Army Council recently adopted in England, but I think I will be able to show that such is not the case. I think it would be fairer to the minister and less subject to dispute if I read a short extract from his speech in Committee of the Whole. He said:

In view of the course which has been pursued by the War Office, I have thought it advisable to provide, in the Bill now before parliament, the machinery by which the government of this country may follow the example of the imperial government. Under the