

contract for its manufacture was entered into, before I had the honor of receiving my present appointment; and I have not been connected in any way with the Boards of expert rifle-men who have discussed and approved the arm, nor am I in any way pledged to this rifle or another. Speaking personally, I can only say that I fully endorse what the Minister has said about the defects discovered, they are faults of detail, and, so far as I have seen, are neither irremediable nor inherent in the Ross rifle. They can be, and many have already been, remedied. The body and action generally of the rifle seem strong and good. Similar defects to those found in the Ross have come out, more or less, in all new rifles, when put in the men's hands before the pattern is finally adopted—to find out these very points. The men use the rifles in their usual rough and ready fashion, and certainly do not bestow on them the care an expert shot bestows on his target weapon. Hence, hitherto unsuspected weaknesses are discovered. They are certain to be found. I have, therefore, no hesitation in advising the members of the D. R. A. to suspend their judgment and do nothing to excite prejudice against the rifle until it has been fully tried. Distrust is easy to create, most difficult to eradicate. I see no reason why it should not eventually turn out to be an excellent weapon.”

So far about 46,000 rifles have been delivered to the Government, and in this connection it is proper to notice the significant statement made by the Minister of Militia from his place in the House of Commons:

“There is not a single rifle of the number which have been delivered that is not a serviceable rifle and is not fit and safe to use in the Canadian army if it were necessary to use it. I make this statement here and accept full responsibility for it. I make it upon the report which I hold of those who are competent to advise me as to

matters of that kind. I shall read the particulars necessary to show that of those rifles which are not now serviceable, there is not one which cannot be made serviceable with a very slight expenditure. Yet we have this hon. gentleman trying to terrify the militia, trying to persuade the House that we have purchased rifles which are only fit to be placed on the scrap heap. I assure you there is not one word of truth in it.”

Sir Frederick also pointed out that, unlike the Lee-Enfield, the Ross rifle is inspected in all its main parts, so that the parts are practically interchangeable, although where accuracy as fine as the five-thousandth part of an inch is required, it is scarcely possible to produce a rifle that will never fail to interchange with another of the same type.

Ever since the rifle was first issued it has been the object of the keenest criticism. In service, from time to time, points where improvement could be made have been noted and these improvements have been made, until now the Ross rifle is regarded by its friends as being the best military light arm in the world. Many times since its manufacture began in Canada it has been tested by committees of experts, and it has undergone the ordeal with credit and satisfaction. When it was proposed that this rifle be adopted by the Northwest Mounted Police, a commission consisting of J. H. McIlree, Superintendent Morris, and Inspector Gilpin Brown, were appointed to examine it and present a report. Their report was as follows:

“The Board proceeded to the range with Mr. Paddon, representing Sir Charles Ross, the inventor of the arm, and a number of shots were fired at the 200 and 600 yards range. Two rifles were submitted for trial, one long 28-inch barrel, and the other a shorter 25-inch barrel. 150 rounds were fired from the long rifle in ordinary practice, and the scores made