

House of Commons Debates

FOURTH SESSION—TENTH PARLIAMENT

SPEECH

OF

MR. SAM. HUGHES, M.P.

ON

THE ROSS RIFLE

OTTAWA, FRIDAY, MAY 22, 1908.

Mr. SAM. HUGHES (Victoria and Halliburton). Mr. Speaker, I have been asked by the hon. member for North Toronto, (Mr. Foster) what I am going to do now. My first step is to draw closer to my leader in the hope that I may be able to induce him to see the error of his way and later on induce the hon. member for Sherbrooke (Mr. Worthington) to withdraw the motion which he has placed before the House or to turn around and support me in assisting to vote that motion down. With reference to my leader, I may say at the outset that I wish to correct a false impression which has been insidiously created, or attempted to be created, by gentlemen who have been supporting the views laid down by the hon. member for Sherbrooke. In fact, the hon. member for Sherbrooke himself stated that one reason why this important matter of the Ross rifle tragedy had not been brought by the Conservative party in a formal manner before this House and the country was that the leader of the opposition chanced to be of the same name and of the same family as the hon. Minister of Militia and Defence (Sir Frederick Borden). In so far as the coming First Minister of Canada, the present leader of the opposition is concern-

ed, in his suggestions to the Militia Committee of the Liberal-Conservative party—a committee of which I have the honour to be chairman—his requests have invariably been to probe to the bottom any matter concerning the militia expenditure of this country, or concerning anything arising from the expenditure of public money or the conduct of public affairs in connection with that department. He has given the same encouragement to inquire into the affairs of that department as he has to investigate other departments. I shall have something to say upon that subject later on. There is one thing that the hon. member for Sherbrooke is noted for, in which he stands pre-eminent, and that is the magnificent smile that he has. He is smiling now, but before I get through I purpose endeavouring to show that smile on the other side of his face. I purpose endeavouring to show what his conduct has been in the treatment of this matter. He may say that the Militia Committee has never done its duty. It rests with the hon. gentleman or with any other hon. member who discusses this question fairly and squarely to show wherein there has been anything neglectful or improper on my part in looking after the militia interests