

of the Scottish Dragoons had withdrawn Dr. Pickel's name at the time he charged Mr. Fisher with striking out that name as an arbitrary act of outside interference.

But Lord Doundonald contends that the interference of members of the government in regard to the new corps in the eastern townships was merely the culmination of a long series of interferences by the government.

To quote from the statement:—

In my efforts I was constantly hampered by interference with that particular part of my work. This interference began very soon after my arrival. It has continued incessantly ever since. Mr. Fisher's interest in the affairs of the 13th Scottish Light Dragoons was simply the final incident in a long list of various phases of obstruction. My only reason in remaining in my post was to benefit the militia of Canada, but my efforts were so persistently blocked that I came to look upon the task as a hopeless one. I was forced to reflect very seriously upon what I could do to effect my object—the improvement of the militia. It seemed to me that, imperfect as is the training, great as is the lack of armament, numerous as are the faults of detail, there lies behind all these evils a far greater evil—the indifference of the men who govern the country to the welfare of the force.

Throughout the statement these are the grounds of complaint, interference and indifference and Sir Frederick Borden dealt with them separately. He pointed out that in this country we had a civil army, a volunteer system, and that the co-operation of civilians and influential men in the district where a new corps was about to be formed was indispensable to success. It was the co-operation of the Hon Sydney Fisher in his efforts to raise an efficient regiment and to interest the whole community and not one-half, that Lord Doundonald resented and termed an interference. Both Sir Frederick Borden and Mr. Fisher contended in parliament that such interference is justifiable and Mr. Fisher pointed out that his knowledge of the community enabled him to detect in one of Lord Doundonald's recommendations a proposal to make a major of a squadron out of a civilian who had never worn a uniform in his life and had no knowledge or experience in military affairs. Mr. Fisher asked that

such a man should not be placed in charge of the lives of other men but that an experienced military man should be appointed major of that squadron. The fact that the man Mr. Fisher recommended was a Conservative did not, in Mr. Fisher's opinion, have anything to do with the merits of the case. Mr. Fisher was acting with the sanction of the minister of militia and at the time the list of appointments was finally put through was actually the acting minister of militia during the temporary absence from the country of Sir Frederick Borden.

To show how far Lord Doundonald misconceived his position Sir Frederick read in the House two eminent authorities in England on the relation of the military to the civil authority. We think it worth while devoting the space to the text of these two opinions as quoted by the minister in the House of Commons. First he read an extract from a speech of the Right Hon. Hugh C. Childers, delivered in 1882. It is to be found in a book entitled "Life of Right Hon. H. C. Childers," second volume at page 56:

It has been suggested that of late years successive Secretaries of State for War have in the government of the army, been encroaching on the functions of others. The army, these critics say, is the army of the Crown; we, Secretaries of State forsooth, want to make it the army of the House of Commons. The Crown, they say, governs the army through the Commander-in-Chief. The Secretary of State is a mere financial officer, who has gradually intruded on the province of the Crown by means of the power of the purse.

Now, gentlemen, I am bound to tell you that all this is a mere delusion. These writers ought to reflect that to no one can the wrongful attribution of power be more distasteful than the sovereign herself. The Queen, gentlemen, as she is the most just and wise, so is she the most constitutional of sovereigns. The Queen is the undoubted head of the army; she is also the head of the navy, and of every branch of the public service. As such she can do no wrong. But she does no wrong for the express reason that all her acts are the acts of her responsible ministers. The doctrine of personal government which you have seen so undisguisedly claimed in Prussia within the last few days is absolutely unknown in our constitution.

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