

That, Sir, is the record of the United States rifle. What is the record of the Canadian rifle? Mark I was issued; certain improvements were made in it. Mark II was issued. Certain changes were made from Mark I to Mark II which did not turn out to be very advantageous. These were changed back again from Mark II to Mark III. The old lever backsight has been abandoned and a return has been made to the form presented in old Mark I. The thread attaching the barrel to the receiver in Mark II has been abandoned and a return made to the thread in the old Mark I. This is the Whitworth thread. When Sir Charles Ross presented his rifle to the committee it had a double trigger action, it had a gathering pull and a final pull. That was in the rifle which he presented for adoption. We have abandoned the single pull and returned to the double trigger pull as presented in the original rifle. We have also returned to the long barrel so that it may be better adapted for shooting purposes. We have also done what the United States people have not yet been able to do and what the English people have not yet been able to do; we have an absolutely perfect safety catch which acts the moment the sear is released from the cocking piece bent and insures its safe reengagement. There are some small changes, such as screws, bands and swivel straps, which are of no account. Last year, in my address to this House, I went with considerable detail into the difference between the Ross rifle and the Lee-Enfield rifle. I do not know that it is necessary at this time to repeat that comparison. There are important differences but they are involved in the one great principle of the straight pull. That is only two motions, in loading and firing, simply pulling the bolt back and pressing it forward again, as against four motions in what we call the lever or rotary motion rifles. The two nations that use straight pull rifles are the Austrian and Swiss nations. The other nations largely use the rotary motion. Fault was found by the hon. member for Sherbrooke yesterday with regard to the report of the United States government on the Ross rifle test at Springfield. I think I have made it absolutely clear that the report upon that rifle is satisfactory, taking into consideration the report of the same committee upon their own rifle. There have been fewer changes made in the Ross rifle since that date than in the American rifle. I have known a number of gentlemen high up in the Ordnance Department of the United States and had they not adapted, two years before, Sir Charles Ross appeared before them, the new Springfield rifle, the chances are a thousand to one that the United States government would have adopted the principle of the Ross rifle for their national arm.

I now come to the question of long and

short rifles. The question of the backsight is the crux of the whole situation and the cause of the whole dissatisfaction with the Ross rifle. There is, I am free to say, in the lever backsight, an abominable sight to the Ross rifle. No man can make good scores consecutively with it. The sight will jump four or five degrees when the recoil comes. With the lever sight there is a straight reaction and a shock which frequently jars the springs holding the sight in its position and a change of three or four degrees would make a difference of 200 or 300 yards in the sighting of the rifle. The South African war was responsible for the fad of the lever or Dutch pattern sight. After the South African war the British government changed to the short barrel, adopting what they call the Dutch pattern sight and discarding the bayonet. But, they have got over that. We have seen the effect of the short barrel. The Russo-Japanese war showed the effect of the long barrel on accurate shooting. They found out that the short rifle was no good for accurate shooting. In all the matches held in England last year, at Bisley and everywhere else, there was not one short rifle in use, and in the great matches of the United States last year there was not one short United States rifle in use, although the new United States rifle has an initial velocity of 2,700 feet to the second and in that way it is supposed to overcome the defect of the short barrel. The Lee-Enfield barrel (short) is twenty-five inches long, the American rifle is twenty-four inches long and the Ross short rifle twenty-eight inches long, a little longer than either and, to that extent, better adapted for good shooting. That it has been successful in making a good shooting rifle I might refer to the fact that last year in Toronto Mr. Mortimer took the first prize in the aggregate matches even with the old lever sight, and I might also state that at the Ottawa ranges Ommandsen and Wallingford, the two noted English riflemen, made most magnificent scores. Ommandsen named his shot every time but he did not have the lever backsight on. He had the Sutherland sight. He named every shot. He said: I am going to make a bull at such and such a spot and he fired and made the bull. He hit the target in every instance at the exact spot that he had named. But, he admitted that holding the short barrel is much harder on the men. It calls for the exercise of much greater physical force to hold the short barrel down to position than if it were a more substantial and steadier barrel. There is a return in Mark III to the long rifle, first, on account of the accuracy of shooting, second, it is better adapted for the bayonet, and third, it has been shown that the important feature of warfare is no longer masses of men and troops but that the result depends largely on accurate