

Mr. FOWLER. I understand that they place no limit on the number of officers they ask you to appoint?

The MINISTER OF MILITIA AND DEFENCE. No, they simply asked the question, what we proposed to do.

Mr. FOWLER. The argument with reference to the permanent officer applies to the district officer commanding, because he has under his command infantry, cavalry and artillery. When the troops are in camp he is in charge of the field manoeuvres of a large mixed force, and therefore he should be a man who can command a brigade, and with sufficient military knowledge to entitle him to the highest position the department can confer. I think it would be a very good rule that no man should be placed in the position of district officer commanding who is not fitted to be a colonel, and that upon his promotion to that position he should be given that rank. To the lay mind these nice little distinctions do not amount to much; but to the military man, there is a wide gulf between lieutenant-colonel and full colonel; and it is rather annoying to an officer in command of a district to find men occupying very much inferior positions to his and yet his superiors in rank. I throw out the suggestion therefore, that these district officers, many of whom are superior men, should have this rank.

The MINISTER OF MILITIA AND DEFENCE. I may say that all the promotions which have taken place have been made on the recommendation of the General Officer commanding. I have been very particular about that. In fact, that matter must be left in his hands, he being a professional soldier and having large experience in such matters. I have discussed with the General the very point my hon. friend has raised, and I believe that within a short time the line he has indicated will be largely followed. I think there is a great deal of force in what he says, though I do not think the General will feel disposed to recommend, and I do not know that I would feel disposed to agree to it if he did, that all the district officers indiscriminately should receive the rank of full colonel, although several undoubtedly are entitled to it.

Mr. FOWLER. My point was not that all the men in that position at present should receive the rank, but that no man should get the position unless he was fitted to receive that rank. It is difficult for an officer coming from England to ascertain in two or three years the fitness of the different officers; and that raises the question whether it would not be well for us to have a Canadian officer in command rather than one from England. I do not propose to discuss that now, but that is my view of the question.

Hon. Mr. BORDEN (King's).

Mr. BORDEN (Halifax). I would like to ask the minister whether anything has been done with respect to a matter that was discussed two years ago very considerably, and also to some extent last year, that is, the organization of corps of mounted troops as a substitute for or in addition to the forces we have in Canada at the present time.

The MINISTER OF MILITIA AND DEFENCE. The organization of mounted corps to take the place of infantry has not been done to any great extent as yet, although in the district near or about Brandon and elsewhere in the North-west, I think there are four independent corps of mounted troops; in the city of Toronto a corps of mounted rifles has been organized; and in the province of Quebec the number of mounted troops is being increased. Outside of these districts, so far as I can remember, nothing has been done; but I am still of opinion that it ought to be done as rapidly as possible, and the General himself recommends in his report that in the case of rural corps we should substitute mounted rifles for infantry.

Mr. SPROULE. Is this pay and allowances for the whole force, or only for the permanent force?

The MINISTER OF MILITIA AND DEFENCE. The pay of the permanent force is really only \$225,000. The other items are: Pay of the headquarters and district staff, \$43,100; pay of the active militia attending schools of instruction, \$45,000; allowances for drill instruction, care of arms, postage, stationery to the active militia, \$75,000; guards of honour, etc., \$4,000. These items are not chargeable to the permanent force, but to the militia.

Mr. FOWLER. I notice an increase of \$1,490. How is that figured out?

The MINISTER OF MILITIA AND DEFENCE. The increase is in the headquarters and district staff, and is made up as follows: Lodging allowance for the district officer commanding in districts 1 (London), 2 (Toronto), and 11—\$400 to the first and \$500 to each of the last two. Then, there is an increase of pay to the district officer commanding number two district of \$455, and a decrease of \$365 in district number eight.

Mr. FOWLER. This lodging is where there is no barrack accommodation for the officers?

The MINISTER OF MILITIA AND DEFENCE. Yes.

Annual drill and musketry, including clothing and stores, \$520,000.

Mr. FOWLER. I notice an increase in this item of \$80,000, is it the intention to carry out the recommendation of the general commanding regarding extending the period of drill?