

the "A" class, and were sent back to the trenches again, other men being brought from the hospitals to take their places. While this arrangement is desirable, it hampered the work to a considerable extent, as men having experience were taken away, and new men brought in who had to be trained for the work. I saw no men idling in the Government offices. It seemed to me they were all busy, and discharging their duties industriously, and doing hard work. I think any one who knows Sir George Perley and his business habits, and any one who knows General Turner's capacity, energy and industry, will appreciate that they would not desire to employ a man unless there is work for him to do. More men have been going over, and there will naturally be an increase in the work to be done. In order that we may discuss the matter intelligently, I hope we shall have a statement showing the figures of the people employed, before the House prorogues.

I did not rise to discuss this matter, but I felt it was only an act of fair play on my part to say a word in justice to General Gwatkin, because I believe he has given good value to the country, and is an admirable man for the position he occupies.

Mr. R. B. BENNETT: I do not believe any more unfair, unjust or ungenerous attack was ever made in this House upon a great, unselfish public servant than was made this afternoon against General Gwatkin. I did not know General Gwatkin when this war broke out. He is a distinguished British officer who served with the Manchester battalion, but so long as he was not prepared to bend his will to that of the ex-Minister of Militia and Defence (Sir Sam Hughes), he must needs be attacked. It reflects no great credit upon this country that so distinguished a citizen and so distinguished an officer should be made the subject of such a conspiracy of attack as that which has taken place this afternoon between the hon. member for Pictou (Mr. Macdonald) and the hon. member for Victoria (Sir Sam Hughes).

Some hon. MEMBERS: Order.

Mr. R. B. BENNETT: I did not know except of the military attainments—

Mr. LEMIEUX: I rise to a point of order. The hon. gentleman refers to a conspiracy between two hon. members against General Gwatkin. I think the expression is out of order.

Mr. SPEAKER: I do not think the hon. member for Calgary (Mr. R. B. Bennett) [Mr. Hazen.]

is in order in attributing motives of that nature, unless he has personal knowledge of the matter.

Mr. BENNETT: I will put it this way—the very apparent conspiracy which has always been evidenced by the conduct of the hon. member for Pictou (Mr. Macdonald) and that of the hon. member for Victoria;—one asserts, then calls upon the other to support. This is the common practice, whether dealing with the Ross rifle, or General Gwatkin, or anything else. The people of the country are getting wise to this.

Sir SAM HUGHES: I rise to a point of order, and to ask you a question, Mr. Speaker. I went to you and I asked you if I would have an opportunity of replying to any statement that might be made after I spoke. I was informed by you that I would not have such an opportunity.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. gentleman put this question to me:—would he be in order in speaking after the Prime Minister? I said, no, inasmuch as the Prime Minister, in replying, closed the debate.

Sir SAM HUGHES: I rise to a question of privilege. I did not attack General Gwatkin. I shall give General Gwatkin's record at any time there is an opportunity to do so. If necessary, I am prepared to go into the whole matter. I may also say I have never been actuated by any animus. I have tolerated General Gwatkin when I should have dismissed him many a time.

Mr. R. B. BENNETT: In 1915 General Gwatkin was referred to by one of the leading officers in the British army, in my presence in London, as being one of the most efficient soldiers of his time, having regard to the rank he held. Colonel Gwatkin came to this country with General Lake. He was promoted under the late Administration.

Sir SAM HUGHES: He was a major.

Mr. R. B. BENNETT: He was a major when he came here, but a colonel when the war broke out. It was then that the general staff of the British War Office desired him to return to England, as the Minister of Marine and Fisheries (Mr. Hazen) said, but because his services were indispensable to this country, he remained here against his better judgment. Now, after giving exemplary and untiring service to Canada, he is made the object of attack in this House. To my knowledge General Gwatkin is the hardest working man in any