

Mr. SAM. HUGHES. I trust that the minister will make that wholly clear in the clause. Because, there are a good many colonial officers who would object to serving under an imperial officer under such conditions as I have named.

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. There will not be the slightest danger.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. If the minister says he does not regard the last clause as necessary why does he include it?

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. The words 'the senior general officer' would seem to govern. But, if the words are necessary, we will leave them. In reading it I thought the words 'shall be' not very scientific either. Perhaps it should read 'must be'. Otherwise, it would seem that we are, by this statute giving senior rank to one who might be of inferior rank.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. I do not know what would be the effect of the expression 'serving jointly.'

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. In the event of war here in Canada and of a British force being sent to take part in that war, the two forces will be serving jointly. Then the contingency would arise under which His Majesty would naturally, properly and necessarily name the officer commanding the whole army, including the militia as well as the regular force.

Mr. SAM. HUGHES. But what would be the effect under the clause as proposed and with the intention expressed by the minister? Take an instance. War breaks out to-morrow. The general officer commanding the imperial forces in Canada is Major General Sir Charles Parsons, of Halifax, who is many degrees junior to the general officer commanding in Canada, Lord Dundonald. Under this proposed section, the general officer commanding in Canada would be placed junior to some other officer. I am satisfied that if war broke out to-morrow Lord Dundonald would command the whole outfit in Canada. It may be that the minister was thinking of one of his own officers whom he has in mind as the future general officer commanding, and he would not desire to place him over Lord Dundonald.

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. It does not matter who may happen at the time to command the Canadian militia. At the time when war breaks out there is an officer in command of the Canadian militia, and whether he is an Australian, an imperial officer or a Canadian does not matter. When the Canadian forces, and the imperial force, are to act together, the intention is that His Majesty shall appoint the officer to command the whole army, and that that officer shall be senior to the officer commanding the militia.

Mr. SAM. HUGHES. It might be the same man. The hon. minister had better re-draft the clause.

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. Well, the point will be considered.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. I am not sure how it would work out in the present condition. If war should break out, with the British forces at Halifax and the west, would the command of the whole force pass to Lord Dundonald, or would the British troops be commanded by—

Mr. SAM. HUGHES. The officer at Halifax, no matter how junior.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. But, under the provisions of this statute he would not take command of the whole, because he would be inferior in rank to the officer commanding the Canadian militia.

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. That is the intention.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. After all, the object aimed at is this—is it not?—that, where the Canadian militia serve with the imperial forces, they shall be under command of the imperial officer, if he is senior in rank to the Canadian officer, but the converse is not true?

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. For instance, if war occurred, and there were a lieutenant general in command at Halifax, under the clause that I propose he would command. If he were junior to the officer commanding the militia, he would not command, but it would be within the power of the Crown to name an officer who should be senior to the officer commanding the militia.

Mr. SAM. HUGHES. I have not the clause as proposed before me. But why not leave it to read that His Majesty should appoint the officer that should command the united force?

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. That is just what we are doing.

Mr. SAM. HUGHES. This says that he shall be senior to the officer commanding the Canadian militia. But he may be the same man. That is the point I am making.

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. Take the case of my hon. friend (Mr. Sam. Hughes) suggested a moment ago. Suppose there is an imperial officer of senior rank and war breaks out, would he think that we should give power to the Crown to place over the head of Lord Dundonald an officer of inferior rank?

Mr. SAM. HUGHES. No; but what I want to point out is that if the hon. minister will make the clause provide that in case of joint action, His Majesty may appoint as commander of the whole force a senior general officer of his regular army, that would be sufficient.