

Speaking of the American rifle, he says:

A prominent expert on military rifles stated that the Americans claim their peep sight is practicable for active service conditions. They have the peep and the open sight and either can be used. Their sight is also placed much farther from the eye than in the case of the Ross.

The object of the regulations of the National Rifle Association is not to discriminate against the Ross rifle, as one would be led to believe from what has been said, but merely to prevent a peep sight being used which could not be used in actual service. These competitions are carried on under actual service conditions with a view to increasing the efficiency in service—that is the object of the whole expenditure. If the Ross rifle has a sight attached with which that rifle cannot be used, in service, the regulations are not unreasonable. I do not think members should get excited about this matter. For one, as a humble member of this House and a humble member of the militia, I should be very sorry—if that the purpose of these regulations be what I have indicated—to see it result in the abandonment of the annual event which every militiaman and every Canadian follows with a great deal of interest, that of having our volunteers go over to the old country to take part in this great rifle shooting contest.

Mr. MICHAEL CLARK (Red Deer): Before the hon. Minister of Militia answers those who have spoken, I should like to put to him directly a couple of questions. I need hardly say that I am far from being an expert on this matter; it is out of my latitude altogether. But I may say that I have not unlimited faith in Government departments, even in Great Britain. Last winter, we were afraid the ministers had too much faith in Government departments in Great Britain. We had a great deal of discussion along that line.

Mr. S. HUGHES: Does the hon. gentleman refer to me?

Mr. CLARK: No, I refer to the fighting department on water; my hon. friend the Minister of Militia has charge of the fighting department on land. The danger of the Government this year appears to be that they are going to the other extreme, and are breaking off from British connection altogether.

The first question I want to put quite clearly to my hon. friend is based upon an assertion which he has made very confidently, but not more confidently than it has been repeated by the hon. member for

[Mr. S. Sharpe.]

Carleton, N.B.—that the Ross rifle is a better arm than the Lee-Enfield. I should like to ask the hon. minister if the War Office admits that the Ross rifle is a better rifle? I should like to ask a second question. Does the War Office issue this regulation, which is complained of, in an arbitrary manner—which is, perhaps, a manner easy to acquire in military matters—or does it give any reason for the regulation?

Mr. S. HUGHES: I will answer the question of the hon. member for Red Deer first. As to whether the War Office admits that the Ross rifle is better than the Lee-Enfield, I would point out that they recognize that the Ross rifle has won its way to the front in all matches and in all places where it has been tried throughout the world. Although they do not officially admit its superiority—it is a difficult thing to get the War Office to recognize that the colony has a better rifle than the motherland—they recognize it by doing away with their own rifle and attempting to bring out a new one based to a certain extent on our new rifle, the Ross. As to whether or not the War Office issued its regulations in an arbitrary manner, I may say that they have notified the National Rifle Association that if certain regulations are not complied with they will absolutely withhold all assistance. Their assistance, which is given in the way of concessions of ammunition, officers to control matches, and so on, is the life of the association, and therefore it must bow to the will of the British War Office. I do not know that they give a reason, unless it is to train the riflemen in the system of musketry laid down in their regulations. It is only in very recent years that the British soldier has been trained in musketry at all, but the authorities are recognizing now that it does count for something in time of war to know whether a soldier can hit the enemy or merely bang off shots in the air and scare him away.

With regard to the remarks of the hon. member for North Ontario (Mr. Sharpe), I am of the opinion that if he had left out the word 'if' there would have been nothing left of his speech. The only definite assertion he made was that the aperture sight rifle was not fit to be used in active service. If the hon. gentleman had been listening to me, he would have observed that I quoted the opinion of the best British expert on the subject, Major Richardson, who said that at Stockholm last year the Yankees, with the aperture sight rifle, fired twice as rapidly as the British soldiers. At the