

Hon. Sir MACKENZIE BOWELL—That was the case once.

Hon. Mr. SCOTT—But it must be remembered that Mr. Mulock has cut down the revenues of the department, and given the public the benefit of very largely reduced postage, and necessarily, had there not been an enormous increase due to the fact that postage was very much cheaper, the deficit would have been continued and been much greater. I did not understand from the observations made by my hon. friend that the deficit had run over \$400,000. I rather think it may be in that neighbourhood. There is no doubt he has brought down the chronic deficit several hundred thousand dollars. He has in addition given the public cheaper postage, and has increased largely the number of post offices in the country, and I think for that he is entitled to very considerable credit. The hon. gentleman also was of opinion that we should have made some remark in reference to the contingent. In order to quite understand the line taken by the government, I will just go back and refer to the time, now nearly a year ago, when a number of—I will not say a number, but several—active imperialists and fighters were anxious to go to South Africa. They made an application to the War Office direct, not through the government of Canada, but either personally or by letter. The question was naturally referred to the Canadian authorities.

Hon. Mr. McCALLUM—And you permitted them to go?

Hon. Mr. SCOTT—We gave our consent, but we suggested that the selection of the officers who were to take charge of Canadian troops should properly be left to the Canadian government. We were then advised that the troops were not wanted. That was the position—that they were not wanted, and so the matter dropped for several months, up to the autumn of last year. In the meantime, as hon. gentlemen well know the war—what was called a war before—was practically over. You cannot call the operations in South Africa to-day a war. The Imperial force numbers, I think, 290,000 men, and according to Sir Alfred Milner's last statement, the number of Boers under arms is about 8,000. You can scarcely call that warfare. The Imperial government long ago recognized that the war had practi-

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cally terminated, because business has been going on at Johannesburg as if nothing was happening in the mountains to the north. I note that recently, according to the army estimates, the government have cut down that portion of the army intended for South Africa by 30,000 men. Under these circumstances, it was scarcely necessary that Canada should be offering a force. Any force that goes there now is more a constabulary than a military body. The effort is to ferret out the Boers. They are in the fastnesses of the mountains, where they elude the troops, knowing the country as they do, and are able to make their escape. We have had a very sad instance of it in the last 24 hours where we find that by a trick, a Boer seen leaving a house, the troops, unaccustomed to Boer tactics gave chase. In the meantime they were surrounded and two officers and ten men were killed, and a considerable number wounded. It can scarcely be called warfare, where you are trying to catch a body of men who are constantly eluding pursuit, their knowledge of the country enabling them to get away on every occasion. Canada, I think, has given ample proof that she has done her share in aiding the mother country in the present war. In addition to the contingents we sent in the first instance, we have continued to garrison Halifax, where a regiment of the line had been always stationed as a naval port, and we have also largely contributed to keeping up Esquimalt. I think we spend about \$130,000 a year at present, taking into consideration the buildings that are going up at Esquimalt, besides the large sum we are paying for the maintenance of the force at Halifax, relieving a regiment of the line that was thus enabled to go abroad. I do not think it lies with my hon. friend to make comments, because the government of which he was a member when they were asked on a former occasion to contribute, declined most positively to be at any expense whatever, but gave permission to the Imperial government to recruit in Canada, on the understanding that the entire cost must be paid by the Imperial government.

Hon. Sir MACKENZIE BOWELL—What was the date?

Hon. Mr. SCOTT—It was the 12th of February, 1885, that the following despatch was sent:—