

Mr. GRAHAM: Twelve hundred he said.

Mr. MACDONALD: Every one who has been interested in the boys over there, or who has had friends over there, or who has spoken to the men who have returned, knows that continuous complaints have been made in regard to the way in which matters have been administered under Sir George Perley. So far as concerns the direction and arrangement of our gallant sons is concerned, it is time Canada should have the best military control to be found anywhere. The country expects it, and will be disappointed if it is not given. Owing to the fact that the war is on, and means of communication are necessarily uncertain, and because of parliamentary rules with reference to what may be made public, we have not all the information we might have, but, so far as we know our condition will not be enhanced, and the interests of the boys in the fighting line will not be improved, if the administration is left in the hands of Sir George Perley. I object to the principle of the Bill and to the proposition that military control of our forces overseas should be perpetuated in the hands of Sir George Perley.

With reference to the appointment of under-secretaries, I noticed the other day an hon. gentleman on the other side took the position that when men are appointed to public places in this democratic country, it is not a justification of the appointment to say they are doing the work for nothing. If that were to be the rule, only men of wealth could render public service hereafter. If we are to be told that the man who is going to take the position will render the service for nothing, then we have reached a point where the poor man is to be proscribed. If the man of ability, energy and capacity who can render service is not to be employed, because, forsooth, there is another man prepared to perform the service for nothing, we have a condition of affairs which should not exist. I submit, this whole legislation is not in the interests of the country. I submit, if the Minister of Militia had a proper military head working in conjunction with him, he would not need any military under-secretary, and if the military organization of the country had been arranged properly, or is arranged properly now—and it is not too late to rearrange it—there would be no need for a military secretary. And it would be no justification for his appointment, to say that he was not going to accept any pay. The seriousness of the situation demands that

[Mr. Macdonald.]

we should have the very best brains and ability at the service of the country, and the fact alone that a man is willing to perform the service for nothing is no justification for his appointment, yet that is all that is put forward in support of this change. If Canada only knew the absolute impossibility of well-directed efforts along proper lines under the conditions we have to-day, so far as our military organization is concerned, she would rouse herself to see to it that a change is made. At this moment, with all the seriousness of the war before us, and facing the tremendous possibilities of death and carnage every day, we are in the position that we have as our military head a man whom the British Government declared to be incompetent, and we are putting in permanent charge of our military organization a man who knows nothing about military affairs.

Mr. LEMIEUX: Mr. Speaker, I would like to be permitted to renew the objection I made the other day, not so much to the creation of the office—I understand the course has been decided upon by my right hon. friend the Prime Minister—but to the acceptance of offices of emolument by the new overseas minister and the under-secretaries without going before their electors. I believe, notwithstanding the precedent cited by the right hon. gentleman the other day, that it does not exactly fit the situation in Canada. I think my right hon. friend should revise his opinion and that, if he decides to create these offices, the gentlemen who are going to be appointed, one the overseas minister, and the others under-secretaries, should follow the time-honoured practice and return to their electors for their endorsement. It is a leap in the dark; too great, too serious, a departure from the spirit of the British constitution and of British institutions for us to make. I do not see how it could prejudice the hon. gentlemen who are to be the appointees of the Government to take the course I propose. It is admitted that Parliament will soon be at an end by the effluxion of time; that dissolution is not far off, and therefore the hon. gentlemen who have served as under-secretaries and as the overseas minister could well afford to continue to serve without accepting emoluments until the election takes place. I quite understand it would be rather useless to hold a by-election at this time for these gentlemen, but the Government should not do away in such a light manner with the principle, so old and so wise, that any one receiving