

# THE CANADIAN LIBERAL MONTHLY

Vol. III. No. 12.

OTTAWA, AUGUST, 1916.

Two Cents

## THE ROSS RIFLE

The Ross Rifle which has been in use by the Canadian troops for two years has been discarded by order of Sir Douglas Haig, Commander-in-Chief of the British Forces. In future the Canadian troops will be equipped with an improved Lee-Enfield. This concludes once and for all the controversy which has raged round the Ross weapon ever since the troops of the Dominion went into the trenches. This is the answer which the British Commander-in-Chief has given to the request of Sir

Robert Borden made on May 17th last for an investigation of the arm. Sir Robert in making that request stated in his cable that "in consequence of some criticism which had arisen, the Canadian Government were prepared to leave all questions as to the Ross Rifle to the judgment of the Commander-in-Chief, after he had had all necessary tests made under such conditions as are experienced at the front."

The result is evidenced in the brief statement just received from England to the effect that the weapon has been discarded in favor of the Lee-Enfield. The Ross has been the chief weapon of offence and defence of the Canadians during

St. Julien, Givenchy, Festubert, St. Eloi, Zillebeke and Sanctuary Wood. Now as a result of "necessary tests made under such conditions as are experienced at the front" it has been deemed ineffective, and discarded.

So far the reasons have not been given. The public waits with some anxiety, and with justified anticipation for the report.

It is not the first report made concerning the Ross Rifle. But so far the Government has confined itself to a defence of the weapon in the face

of the most adverse criticism, and has declined to make public any British official opinion upon the arm. So far have they persisted in this policy of secrecy that a paper which published a letter from General Alderson concerning the arm in May last, was threatened with incarceration in the tower by the Minister of Public Works, Hon. Robert Rogers. Of that letter, Mr. Rogers said: "The conditions complained of at that time have been remedied. . . We have the good fortune to

possess a rifle that takes second place probably to none at the present time. It is not the misfortune of our soldiers to suffer from the effects of a bad rifle."

On the same occasion Sir Robert Borden declared: "I desire to say in the first place that even if the Ross Rifle was the best in the world it would be possible to destroy its usefulness by making and circulating public statements of this character about it."

Later in speaking about his communication to General Haig, Sir Robert Borden said: "I have no

reason to believe that there will be any lack of effective action by Sir Douglas Haig in making that test and investigation. When it has been made it will be for the Government and for the military advisers of the Government to consider whether and to what extent it should be made public."

What will Sir Robert's "military advisers" advise in that regard? Sir Douglas Haig has taken "effective action"—the most effective possible,



Imperial Officer:—And you Sir Sam and your Government insisted upon your soldiers using this rifle.