

Minister of Militia might give his attention to this matter, and if he can give any explanation of these irregularities I shall be happy to hear them.

Mr. DENISON. There is, no doubt, something in the remarks of the last speaker with respect to these irregularities; but we must not forget that a great many of the men are not able to sign their names, and therefore it is necessary for them to sign by their mark and have it witnessed by some one. The hon. member for Lambton (Mr. Lister), a little while ago, spoke of the militia being in a very demoralized condition. I think that every officer of the force will agree with me when I say that the force is in as good a state now as it ever has been, and possibly better.

Mr. DAVIES (P.E.I.) Do you speak of city or rural districts?

Mr. DENISON. I speak of the militia as a whole. I think that every year we are improving it by degrees, and getting nearer the ideal to which we are looking forward. Now, the rural militia have not had a proper opportunity, because they have only been allowed to drill every other year, and it is impossible for men who turn out once in two years to be as proficient and to do as well as those who turn out every year. I think the remarks of the hon. member for Lambton were probably caused by the report of the General. I have read that report over, and so far as I can gather from it, there are just two points to which he specially directs attention: one is stores and equipments, and the other is the staff. I do not think he says a word in his report against the men of the militia force, nor, for that matter, against the officers. But he does refer to the staff; he says it requires reorganization; and as he has given special attention to that point, I have no doubt that he is correct. I know that a great many members of the staff are now becoming old, and, although I would be sorry to see them disappear from our ranks, still, when the efficiency of the staff requires it, they should not stand in the way. As to the equipment, the other point specially dwelt upon, I think the criticism of the General is well founded. In our own corps we have no complaint about the clothing, although I think, the saddlery is not as good as it might be—whether that is the fault of the manufacturers or contractor, I am not prepared to say. But I entirely endorse what the General said with regard to saddlery. For my own part, I regret to see that many of the corps are being reduced in number; I regret it only in the sense of seeing the force as a whole reduced in number; but it may be a proper move, and I approve of it if other corps are being formed in other places. In fact when corps become obsolete, or useless through being incompetent I think it is time they should be disbanded. But I know, and many

members of this House also know, that in almost every part of Canada there is a desire to form new corps, and wherever that can be done, they should be encouraged. For my own part, I would like to see the Government go even further in that direction than they have done in the past; I would like to see them pass a law that every young man between the ages of 18 and 21 should serve twelve days in the militia. Whether that would be a popular move, I do not know, and I do not care. That is my opinion, and I think that if every young man in the country between the ages of 18 and 21 had to serve twelve days, it would not hurt them at all, and they would always take an interest in the militia afterwards. It would be a good thing for the country if every man felt that he owed something to the state, and was ready to do his share.

Mr. LISTER. I am sure the hon. gentleman who has just spoken has not read the report of the General very carefully, or he would not contradict my statement that the militia force of the country was in a state of demoralization. I will call the hon. gentleman's attention to page 2 of the report, where the General uses these words:

In my previous report I attributed the lack of efficiency of a considerable part of the active militia, to deficient inspection.

Now, if the hon. gentleman will take the trouble to peruse the report made by the General previous to this one, I think he will find that the General says that the Canadian militia is not in an efficient condition. The hon. member for Stormont and Cornwall (Mr. Bergin), a few moments ago, asked whether it was the intention of the Government to reorganize the medical staff of the militia force. The hon. gentleman did not tell the committee wherein that staff is in a defective condition, or what he wished to have done.

Mr. DENISON. The hon. gentleman has spoken of the demoralized condition of the force. The General made use of the term, lack of efficiency.

Mr. LISTER. They are demoralized.

Mr. DAVIES (P.E.I.) Perhaps the hon. gentleman will explain the increase of \$2,200 in the staff at headquarters, and decrease of \$7,000 in the district staff.

Mr. PATTERSON (Huron). That arises owing to a proposed readjustment of the district and headquarters staffs.

Mr. DAVIES (P.E.I.) What is the proposed change?

Mr. PATTERSON (Huron). I propose to do away with some Brigade Majors. There is one vacancy in Quebec, and I propose to do away with some Brigade Majors in other districts.

Mr. DAVIES (P.E.I.) No doubt the hon. gentleman's intention is good, and his pro-