

joy has the responsibility of being prepared to defend the great gifts which it holds. No government, I hold, is properly discharging its duties which does not give due consideration to the question of defence, and I believe that in our time of prosperity we should not forget to take a portion of the increasing revenues of the country and devote them to the improvement of our defences. Now, I will endeavour, very briefly to refer to some of the matters which the hon. member for South Norfolk has brought before us. In the first place, he has referred to the annual report of the Militia Department, and more particularly to the report of the Major General. I am sure those who will take the trouble to read that report will agree with him, as I do, that he has not spoken in too high terms of praise of it. While, perhaps, in some of its details, or, possibly, in some of the conclusions of the Major General, I cannot literally concur, I say that in the main I approve of all that he has said. I think it is a convenient thing that the Major General, the head of the militia for the time being, should always have a free hand in placing before the people of the country his own views as a professional soldier upon the question of defence, and therefore, during my term of office, and I think it has been the custom in the past, the Major General of the day has had a free hand to express his real and genuine views in reference to the condition of the militia of the country and in reference to what he thinks ought to be done to improve the condition of the militia. The hon. member for South Norfolk has quoted very extensively from the Major General's report. I am glad he has done so; I am glad that there will be placed upon 'Hansard' the very valuable suggestions which the Major General has made. I will not, therefore, trouble the committee further by reading extracts from that report. I consider it unnecessary, but I will proceed to refer to some of the more important matters to which my hon. friend has given prominence. My hon. friend has referred to the permanent force and to the Major General's observations in connection with that force. It will be observed in the Major General's report that in a general way he speaks very encouragingly of the condition of that force and the principal recommendation he has to make is that the force should be increased. At present, under the existing law, the permanent force is limited to 1,000 men. Under the recommendations of the General it is proposed to increase the number to 1,500. I think that is a wise proposal; I think that when the Militia Act is re-enacted, or amended, it will be desirable to take further power to increase the number of the permanent force to 1,500. It is not my intention this year to ask for any amendment of the Militia Act, because I hope at the next session of parliament to introduce a Bill which will really be a re-

enactment of the militia law and I may say here that I hope before the next session of parliament to have a Bill ready to be submitted to any members of this House, or any other gentlemen who are interested in such matters, so that we may have the advantage at the next session of parliament of getting the result of a very careful consideration of so important a subject. My hon. friend (Hon. Mr. Tisdale) has next referred to the question of the annual drill, and the desirability of extending the time has been discussed. The Major General advises the extension of the time to twenty-one days, and even to twenty-eight days. I am afraid that under the existing conditions in this country it will be very difficult to get the large number of men that we have now in the militia, some 35,000, to abandon their civil pursuits for so long a time as twenty-one days, not to speak of twenty-eight days. However, I do think that once in three years at least, we might have a longer time in camp than we have now. That will be one of the matters to be considered when the new Bill is being introduced.

The hon. gentleman has referred to what I think is more important, namely, the question of a militia reserve, and in that I am in entire accord with the proposal of the Major General. I may tell the House that at this very moment the suggestion which the general has made is being carried into effect. It is one which will involve very little additional expense, because the extra men who will be required for the purpose of increasing the number up to somewhere near a total strength of 100,000; these men can all be interested in the militia by being brought into the rifle associations, for which provision was made at the last session of parliament. I hope in this way, without any great increase in the annual expenditure, that we shall be able to have what will practically amount to a trebling of the present force of men who will be almost as effective as the 35,000 which we have now. At any rate, it will be composed of men who will have had experience in the art of rifle shooting.

The next item in the estimates is that which provides for the annual drill, and this year that item will be found to include musketry, clothing and stores. In former years the item was simply for 'annual drill,' and under the ruling of the Auditor General the expenditure would be limited to that. In view of the desirability of extending the opportunities of rifle shooting to as large a number of citizens as possible and of utilizing them as a part of the militia reserve of this country, I shall this year ask the House to give me that vote under the heading 'annual drill and musketry'; and to include in that vote, for reasons which I will explain later on, the sum which is ordinarily taken under the heading of