

of Canada, and I would like to ascertain if the government think it is consistent with the discharge of his duty to the people of this country that he should be permitted to rush into print when he feels disposed to do so, and to make statements that are not in accordance with the facts as we understand them on this side of the House, and that will, in the light that this is the case, mislead the public as to the situation. Mr. Preston has made a statement respecting the differences between the government and Lord Dundonald, late General Officer Commanding, and in order that the House may be apprised of the nature of the communication I will read it with permission. It is found at page 8 of the London 'Times,' of Saturday, June 18, and is as follows:

IMPERIAL OFFICERS AND THE CANADIAN MILITIA.

To the Editor of the Times.

Sir,—So long as the discussion upon the recent difficulty between Lord Dundonald and the Canadian government was confined simply to newspaper editorials however unfair they may have been—

Hon. CLIFFORD SIFTON (Minister of the Interior). Will my hon. friend say what paper he is reading from.

Mr. CLARKE. The London 'Times,' of Saturday, June 18. I will send it over to the hon. gentleman.

IMPERIAL OFFICERS AND THE CANADIAN MILITIA.

Is the heading.

To the Editor of the Times.

Sir,—So long as the discussion upon the recent difficulty between Lord Dundonald and the Canadian government was confined simply to newspaper editorials, however unfair they may have been, I do not know that the circumstances altogether called for a reply.

But when I find correspondents in the columns of your journal, of a recent date, accepting as absolutely true various inferences which have been drawn by the public press respecting the administration of the Canadian militia, it occurred to me that a few lines from a Canadian might not be out of place.

I do not propose discussing at length the Dundonald affair, but desire to point out that the charges which are being made as to politics entering into the militia administration in Canada are based upon the refusal of the acting minister to accept Lord Dundonald's recommendation in one particular. And it now transpires that the gentleman whom Lord Dundonald recommended as major of the force was not even connected with the Canadian Militia. I am not going to suggest reasons which might have actuated Lord Dundonald in making this recommendation. Anything of that kind would be uncalled for. But in dealing with the facts of the case that circumstance stands out clear and distinct. I wonder how long the War Office in this country would hesitate about striking the name of a civilian off the list of recommendations by one of its officials under similar circumstances. I

Mr. CLARKE.

think I am safe in saying that it would be done in less time than it was done at Ottawa, and that writers to the press here would have waited for all the circumstances to be made known before charging the minister of the day with being actuated by political reasons.

However, that is outside of the case to which I desire to reply, i.e., Mr. Herbert's allegations in a letter to the 'Times' of the 17th inst., where he bewails with much grief the presence of political prejudice in connection with Canadian militia appointments. As a Canadian I have much pleasure in assuring him that his grief is expended upon a myth. He first builds up a case to suit himself and then proceeds to demolish it without first finding a case established and then arguing from that standpoint. The absolute truth is that the militia is one of the phases of life in Canada which both political parties have kept free from either political partiality or political prejudice. The administration of the militia forces in Canada by both political parties proves from time immemorial the truth of my statement. The discussions in parliament the criticisms which naturally take place under responsible government from time to time all go to prove that both political parties have refrained from introducing politics into the militia. The order of promotions is provided for by legislation and by regulations accepted by parliament, so that politics cannot fairly enter. And if further evidence was wanted of the general non-political character of the Canadian militia it is found in the fact that both political parties are represented in every phase of the citizen military life of Canada.

But the seriousness of the charge which is now made is that the present government are the principal sinners in this particular. To prove how unfair this allegation is one has only to refer to distribution of responsibilities in connection with the late war in South Africa and the Coronation ceremonies two years ago. The principal positions upon both of these occasions were in point of fact given by the government to political opponents. Apart from these particular cases instances without number can be given of a purely provincial or local aspect proving that the opponents of the government of the day have been the recipients of official preferment to as marked degree as government supporters.

But because government opponents in Canada choose to make charges at the present juncture of a broad general character, as is done also in this country, therefore the British public are asked to believe, without hearing the other side of the case, that these charges are absolutely true.

Your correspondent fears that this trouble between an imperial officer and the Canadian government is going to prove detrimental to the entire military system of Canada and that, because Lord Dundonald has taken a course which could only result in his dismissal, therefore the citizen militia of Canada is going to become utterly demoralized. Mr. Bron. Herbert may as well dispel his fears first as last. Canadians have a strong sense of the need of an efficient militia, and they will undoubtedly be able to bring the citizen soldiery of Canada to a high state of efficiency even if there is no imperial officer to give the government of the day the benefit of his experience.

The people of Canada upon this, as upon other subjects of federal jurisdiction, can safely be left to solve their own difficulties and it will be