

As I understand it, the National Rifle Association was formed in order to perfect not only the mother country, but the outlying dominions as well in the art of rifle shooting. I have never been able to understand why the National Rifle Association, or the War Office either, should object to the use of the best rifle that the empire could afford, and let the best man win. I should have thought they would be glad to have a better rifle shown them than their own, and that they would adopt it. I think they must be convinced that ours is the best rifle, otherwise they would not try to bar it from the competitions. The very fact that they do bar it is an admission that it is a better arm than the one they themselves have. As I have said, I shall not discuss this matter at length. I wish only, in this public manner, to congratulate the Minister of Militia (Mr. Hughes) on standing up for the rights of Canada, because it is Canada and because it is right; because we have the best rifle in the world to-day—or in the empire at least, I will go that far. I think the hon. gentleman is a little over-magnanimous, when he offers to loan the British Government the Ross rifle. We should go there with our own weapon and try out this contest on our merits. I do not understand that this is simply a sport. I do not understand that there is any good reason for barring would-be competitors because they have a better weapon than others have. I understand that this National Rifle Association competition is the acme of rifle practice all over the empire, the place to which the selected shots of the empire go to show their prowess, and let the best man win. I hope that the hon. minister will stand by his manly course and not contribute a dollar to send men to England unless those men are to enter the contest with the national arm of Canada, free to win in an open field.

Mr. SAMUEL SHARPE (North Ontario): I would like to ask the hon. minister if the regulations of the National Rifle Association bar out the Ross rifle or merely the aperture sight. As I understand it, the aperture sight is not usable under service conditions,—that is, if a rifle is equipped with the aperture sight it becomes a rifle that is incapable of being used in actual service. It is apparent that there is no unanimity of feeling among the marksmen who have gone to Bisley, because some of them feel that using the Lee-Enfield or other arm with the open sight they could compete on

equal terms with others. It would be unfortunate if our claim could be construed as a demand to be allowed to use a rifle that cannot be used in regular service. The whole object of the competition is to increase the efficiency of rifle shooting with a view to efficiency in the field. Now, as I understand the matter, the regulations of the National Rifle Association are for a rifle that can be used in regular service. For years we had a discussion in this House about certain rifles being manufactured by the Ross Rifle Company that did not comply with the conditions, weapons that were not the rifles used as the national arm of Canada. I understand that the National Rifle Association do not wish to do injustice to the national arm of Canada, but that they are against having the aperture sight which cannot be used in actual service. The Americans, as I understand, have an aperture sight which can be used in actual service, and so the objection that is raised against our rifle does not stand against theirs. I noticed an interview given by Sergeant G. W. Russell, a marksman of note, who does not quite agree with the hon. member for Pictou (Mr. Macdonald) the hon. Minister of Militia (Mr. Hughes) and the hon. member for Carleton, N.B. (Mr. Carvell). Sergeant Russell says:

I would be quite prepared to go to Bisley and use the Lee-Enfield rifle. The National Rifle Association has always enough extra rifles available to provide a team such as the Canadian team, and I have no objection to using any sight that the others use. In fact I would prefer using the Lee-Enfield rifle. I believe that the Long Ross rifle is the better match rifle and would prefer not having the advantages over men using the Lee-Enfield, even if the association did allow it.

According to this experienced 4 p.m. rifleman, who has gone to Bisley several times and distinguished himself in the use of the Ross rifle, the aperture sight affords an undue advantage over those who use the national arm of England which has an open sight. He would prefer to use the Lee-Enfield, such as they are using. He goes on:

As far as the peep sight on the Ross rifle is concerned—

I have spoken of it as the 'aperture sight,' but I understand that it is the same thing.

—I would not say that it is a practical sight for active service purpose. I have no doubt that a peep sight will be devised that will be practical for all purposes, but the present one is not. However, I have never shot over ranges where I did not prefer the peep sight. I used it in rapid firing and it worked well. The present peep sight, however, is too far back.