

do not see any harm in this amendment, but in this case the remark happened to be made to an officer who had power and who wished to tyrannize over this major. I wish to submit an amendment and I would be pleased if the minister would change it in any way to meet the requirements. I believe that under the new system in England to which the leader of the opposition has referred, officers and men are encouraged to take hold of these matters, and that a magazine is to be published whose columns will be open to those who wish to contribute articles and that those who contribute articles are to be paid for them whether or not their views agree with the views of the government, if their articles are worthy of consideration. That is the principle I want. I want to have the officers of the permanent force to whom of course this particular refers, relieved as far as possible from the tyrannous clauses of the King's regulations and the Army Act, or what is termed in the imperial service, the devil's clutches. The amendment I would propose is as follows :

Nothing in this Act shall at any time prevent any officer or man of the militia except when on parade or on duty from temperately expressing his views on questions affecting the welfare of the militia force, and communicating suggestions, criticisms and statements thereon to the public of Canada.

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. I quite agree in the statement that has been made that the object the hon. member has in view in making the suggestion is purely to promote the welfare of the force. I quite accept that statement but I want to point out to him what perhaps he knows better than I do, that this question of discipline is a very delicate one, and a very vital one, and I am very much afraid that such a section as this incorporated into that Militia Bill would be misunderstood and misconstrued, and if, even in one case, it were misinterpreted and advantage taken of it by an officer or man who wished to act in an objectionable manner, a great deal of harm might be done to the force. At the same time, if my hon. friend would look at clause 72, he will agree, and I understand he does agree, that so far as the main part of the clause is concerned, it is quite satisfactory and that there will be no question in the future, if there ever was in the past, as to when the Army Act shall operate so far.

I understand, however, that he objects to that part of subsection 2 which excludes the whole of the permanent force and the members of the permanent staff of the militia from the operation of the Act. Well, possibly there may be some point in what my hon. friend says as to the too great severity of the Army Act. If abuses exist in that direction, we can perhaps modify them to some extent by regulations, or we can modi-

fy the Act in the future. So far as I know, no one connected with the permanent force or with the staff is asking for any change. On the whole, the old law has worked satisfactorily, and I am very much afraid it would be introducing a dangerous element to pass this section at the present time. I would therefore ask my hon. friend, having brought his views before the House, to agree to let the matter stand, at any rate until we have the experience of another year under the new Bill. I shall be very glad to consider this matter, and in making up our regulations, to endeavour as far as possible to meet the points he has suggested.

Mr. SAM. HUGHES. The minister has not shown any specific case in which difficulty could arise. I am not proposing to interfere with discipline. If a man becomes intoxicated or disorderly, he can be dealt with ; but I want men to be free to speak and make suggestions for the good of the force. It has only been within the last two weeks that an officer sent me a private and confidential and registered letter, in which he said, for Heaven's sake do not let anybody know that I have written to you ; and yet he only wished to make a suggestion in regard to the pay of officers and staff sergeants in camp. He had the notion of some city colonels that he was subject to the King's regulations the year round. I am satisfied that very many excellent suggestions could be made by men in the permanent force ; but they are afraid to go to the minister himself. I have said to some of them, why don't you bring that before the minister or the general ? They would shrug their shoulders and say, we have not any authority. It is to meet that class of cases that I make this proposal. I have been thirty-seven years connected with the force, and I have never had to place a man under arrest in my life. I am not at all impressed with the idea that discipline means restriction. On the contrary, it means education, training, self-control, not control by others. Discipline is the exact reverse of oppression and tyranny. I would commend this matter to the minister in the hope that he will give it his very best consideration.

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. I shall be very glad to do that. I would like to say one word further. I think there is a great deal of force in what the hon. gentleman has said, and I think it is possible in the regulations to provide in some way that intelligent men who take an active interest in the welfare of the force should be asked, perhaps once a year, to express their opinion in regard to any subject relating to the force on which they wish to speak. I think that might be useful.

Mr. SAM. HUGHES. I may say that among the best suggestions which I received last year in regard to pensions were some which came to me from a non-commissioned