

that power in time of war, but so far as insurrections or rebellions within this country or the repelling of an attack that might ultimately result in war are concerned, the officer in command, whether he be an imperial officer or a Canadian officer, shall have complete control of the militia and, as I said a moment ago, it seems to me desirable, if we are to learn the art of self-government in respect of defence as we believe we have learned it in other respects, it is desirable that we should begin at once or as soon as it may be convenient to do so, by placing the Canadian militia and the development of that militia under the control of Canadian officers. No reflection on anybody is intended; there is simply the desire to assert ourselves upon this point as we assert ourselves on other points. There is simply the desire on my part to remove what, I repeat, is a reflection, an undesired, and undesirable reflection existing on our own statute books upon the character and capacity of our officers.

Mr. SAM. HUGHES. Would the hon. minister (Sir Frederick Borden) kindly answer the question I submitted in reference to the term of office of this officer and the method of his removal.

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. He is appointed by Order in Council and the power which appoints him can remove him. The term of office will be fixed by regulations.

Mr. SAM. HUGHES. And what becomes of him afterwards? When a general officer commanding in Canada a few years ago was retired from this country he was shipped elsewhere in the service of the empire, but what will become of a Canadian officer under such circumstances?

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. If in the future we should happen to have a general officer commanding who was not to the liking of my hon. friend (Mr. Hughes) and we desired to remove him, the situation might have its inconveniences, but I do not think that will be put forward as a good reason for not taking the step we propose.

At six o'clock, committee took recess.

After Recess.

Committee resumed at eight o'clock.

Mr. SAM. HUGHES. Is the \$6,000 salary an increase?

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. No.

Mr. SAM. HUGHES. I did not intend again speaking on this question of the selection of a general officer commanding were it not for the fact that, judging from the tenor of the hon. minister's remarks, there is no disposition to do otherwise than obtain as heretofore our general officer commanding from the imperial army. There are many reasons why, I think, the law should not

be changed. While I have absolute faith in the ability of Canadians, when given the opportunity, still it must be admitted that the field from which to select here is very limited. Suppose the office were to fall vacant to-morrow, upon whom would the hon. minister call if he wanted to choose an officer from the Canadian service? He would undoubtedly select his man from the permanent corps, and that corps is very limited in number. While many of the officers in that corps are very excellent men, they are still in nearly every case but office men, executive rather than administrative men. Then there would be great rivalry among them, and the chances are influences would be brought to bear on the minister which cannot now be brought to bear. I am inclined to believe that any little balm there might be in making our lads feel that any one of them might become the general officer commanding, that would be more than neutralized by the evil influences that would be introduced. For my part, I care not in what part of the world a man is born so long as he is a good man; but if it be deemed essential that we should select a man who was born in Canada, we could easily find in the British service to-day competent men possessing that qualification. Let me point another drawback, and I am only supposing cases because I accept the statement of the hon. minister that we will still follow the old tradition of taking our general officer commanding from the imperial service. But let us suppose that he will take a Canadian officer. After that officer will have served his four years term, what will become of him? He will be retired on half pay, and he will thus be a burden on the treasury. But in the case of a British officer, when his term expires in Canada, he returns to the old land and is there taken care of. And suppose we should find that the Canadian officer appointed was unsuitable, as some imperial officers have been, under the present system, we can request the imperial officer to resign, as was done in one case a few years ago, and he will go back to the imperial service, but in the case of a Canadian officer, we would not find it so easy to get rid of him. What we require is a practical, competent field officer rather than a mere executive officer, but if we were to choose our general officer commanding from the Canadian forces, we would have to select him from one of the various executive departments of the country, and our selection would be very limited. Then there is another point, and that is the independence of the general officer commanding. In this connection I make no reference to the present minister, because I have always had very great pleasure in endorsing in the many good measures he has brought in from time to time for the benefit of our militia, and, as was pointed out by the hon. member for South Norfolk (Mr. Tisdale) to-day, the Liberal-Conservative party have set

Sir F. W. BORDEN.