

partment here and we have under statute a parliamentary secretary, who is a minister of the Crown, representing the Militia Department. I wonder if all this is necessary? In view of the fact that we are at war; in view of the fact that our people are bending all their energies, financial and otherwise, to the prosecution of our part in this struggle, I wonder if the Canadian electorate will think that there is any real necessity for all this machinery and inter-machinery? Possibly this will happen next: An Act will be introduced to create the office of secretary to the overseas minister, the person holding that office to be also a minister of the Crown.

At six o'clock the House took recess.

After Recess.

The House resumed at eight o'clock.

Mr. GRAHAM: At six o'clock I had almost concluded the few observations I was making on this Bill. As I am not a military expert, I cannot express any opinion as to the qualifications of General Gwatkin whom I have met only once or twice. What the ex-Minister of Militia (Sir Sam Hughes) said this afternoon struck me as a remarkable utterance. If I correctly caught what he said, he informed the House that the British Government would not recommend the appointment of General Gwatkin, then a colonel to the position he holds, and the ex-minister gave that as the reason why he did appoint General Gwatkin, because he believed he would not be interfered with. I will not attempt any criticism; it is a peculiar utterance from an ex-minister of the Crown, and it will require some explanation later.

In regard to the overseas management, it is generally conceded that there is lack of expedition in providing us with information which hon. members, and particularly those who have relatives in England or in France, are very anxious to receive. If fault there be, it is not the fault of the Militia Department here, because I want to bear testimony to the fact that the Minister of Militia, the parliamentary secretary, the deputy minister, and all the officials are, so far as I am concerned, most courteous and very prompt in affording information. It seems however, to take an interminable time to secure information from overseas. The Minister of Militia and some of the officials have once or twice undertaken to secure certain information for me, and perhaps the time required to get it may not seem long to the department overseas, but it

[Mr. Graham.]

seemed a very long time to me. If there were some way by which such information could be given to us more quickly, it would be a great convenience. When there was no minister overseas, I received information, very important to me, within 24 hours. The minister himself would cable direct to his representative overseas and back would come the answer, whereas now there seems to be any amount of red tape to prevent getting information expeditiously.

This House is asked to vote the second reading of a Bill which provides for the appointment and salary of an overseas minister who says he will not accept a salary, and for the appointment of a parliamentary secretary of the Department of Militia and Defence who also says he will not accept a salary, and for the appointment and salary of a parliamentary under-secretary of state for external affairs who tacitly admits that he has devoted part of his time to writing campaign literature. This requires some explanation which I trust will be forthcoming when the Bill is in committee.

Mr. O. TURGEON: (Gloucester): In making a few remarks on this Bill, I do not intend to indulge in personalities, or to make any reference to the hon. gentlemen affected by it. Personally, as far as those two gentlemen are concerned, they have always given me kind treatment, I can especially pay that tribute to the Parliamentary Secretary of Militia and Defence (Mr. McCurdy) in different transactions I have had with him. As to the Minister of Militia and Defence Overseas, his personal qualities will be commended by every one who knows him. I rise simply to enter my protest against the violation of the constitution which this Bill effects the moment it comes into operation. Practically every section of this Bill contains a contemplated violation of the constitution. By it we are appointing three new ministers. Section 5 B reads:

The Governor in Council may appoint a senator or a member of the House of Commons to be Parliamentary Secretary of the Department of Militia and Defence, and such Parliamentary Secretary shall be a minister of the Crown, and shall have and perform such powers and duties as the minister may from time to time prescribe.

Not only is the present Minister of Militia and Defence Overseas confirmed as a Minister of the Crown by this Bill, but these parliamentary secretaries will become ministers of the Crown, and thus the House undertakes the responsibility of ap-