

HON. DR. BORDEN ON MILITIA PROBLEMS.



AT THE conclusion of the field day at Toronto, on Thanksgiving Day, Hon. Dr. Borden was entertained at the annual garrison dinner. Lieut.-Col. Otter, D.A.G., was in the chair, and on his right hand was Hon. Dr. Borden; to his left hand was Hon. Lieut.-Col. Gibson, Hon. A.D.C. to the Queen; others at the head of the table were Mr. Wm. Lount, M.P., Lieut.-Col. Denison, Lieut.-Col. Tyrwhitt, M.P.; Lieut.-Col. Strathy, 5th Royal Scots; Lieut.-Col. Mason, R.G.; Lieut.-Col. Wayling, 12th York Rangers; Ald. Lamb, Ald. McMurrich, Dr. Grasett, and others.

In the speech which the Minister of Militia made in response to the toast in his honor he touched upon a number of important points in connection with matters pertaining to the militia. He received an extremely warm welcome. His opening words were a pleasant returning of thanks for the compliment paid him, and a gracefully put compliment to the militia officers of Canada, in whose company he had already spent many pleasant hours. After a reference to the explanation of the manoeuvres given by the chairman, the Minister declared that the review had been an excellent lesson for the troops and for the officers. It had looked more like business than anything else he had seen in connection with the militia, and he spoke in highly complimentary terms of the work done.

Referring to a remark made by Lieut.-Col. Otter, Dr. Borden assured his hearers that he was an old militiaman, in thorough sympathy with them, but reminded them that he was a Minister of the Crown sworn to protect the revenue. He was going to ask them as militiamen to assist him in seeing that every dollar voted for the militia was honestly and fairly spent. He was going to take them into his confidence, he said, and he continued as follows: "I long ago became convinced that it was absolutely necessary, if we were to have an efficient and an effective militia force in this country, that we must have annual drill (cheers) and I say to you freely that if I do not succeed in having my own way with regard to this particular matter, there is going to be some little trouble. (Hear, hear.) Now, in order to do that, it may be necessary that we shall effect some economies. I believe that there are ways by which very considerable economies can be made in the administration of the Canadian militia, and at the same time to increase the efficiency of the force. But whatever economy is to be brought about let it be understood distinctly that it shall not be made at the expense of sacrificing the annual drill, or of reducing the number of days that we go into camp."

THE PERMANENT FORCE.

"I do not want to venture upon delicate or dangerous ground, but we have in this country what is known as the permanent force, or what used to be called schools of instruction. I am going to say, frankly, that I like the name 'schools of instruction.' I am saying that in the presence of many members of the permanent force, but I have a fashion of saying what I mean, and I usually consider pretty carefully beforehand what I shall say. Now, I have no quarrel with the schools. They were a necessity when they were organized, and they are a necessity to-day. (Cheers.) They have done excellent work. You saw the result of it to-day. (Renewed cheers.) You see the result of it from one end of this country to the other. They have elevated the militia, to a certain extent, out of the Slough of Despond in which it existed. To have an efficient force you must have educated officers. No business can be conducted without men who know that business, and if you

are going to have an efficient militia force you must have officers who know their duties. If they do not your force is practically useless, and your men will be marched into action simply to be slaughtered. (Hear, hear.) At the same time, let the permanent force understand that their office is to teach; and that we have no standing army in this country, and do not intend to have one. We expect every man to make sacrifices. The active militia of this country have made numerous sacrifices—are making them every day—in money and time. We have taken a certain number of men and set them aside, and Canada is paying their expenses—I suppose the larger part of their expenses—and paying them comparatively well. We expect those men to show a good return of their stewardship. I believe they have done it, and will continue to do it. Let us have no feeling or no misunderstanding between these branches of the active force. Let them go hand in hand and help each other, and if they do they will be inseparable, and in that way the schools will make themselves such a necessity to the militia force of this country that they will be always maintained. Sometimes I have heard a hint of difficulties, but let no brevet business, or any other business (much laughter) create dissensions between these two great branches of the militia force of this country. (Hear, hear.) I am confident that the schools of instruction do not want any advantage over the active militia. (Cries of 'That's right.') I am confident of that, and I am equally confident that if any wrong has been done—I do not hold myself personally responsible, because I am guided by my staff in matters of this kind, though I shirk no responsibility—but I say, if any wrong has been done the active militia may depend upon it that wrong will be rectified, and I am sure that no one will be more anxious that that should be done than the very gentlemen in whose interest, it has been said by some, this order has been passed." (Cheers)

Dr. Borden then repelled the charge that the militia force was used in politics, saying that he had received as warm a welcome from Conservative as from Liberal officers. He alluded pleasantly to the visit of Lieut.-Col. Tyrwhitt, M.P., and he concluded as follows: "The people of Canada have at last come to the conclusion, and the administration of the Militia Department has awakened to the belief, that in order to have an efficient militia force it is necessary to properly equip and to officer it. You now have the best rifle, I believe, in the world, provided for the force. You have now weapons on the way out for the armament of the force. We do not want war. The preparations we are making in this country are not intended as a menace to anybody. God grant that we may continue in peace for ever in the future, but every self-respecting man must be able to defend himself; every self-respecting country must be able to defend itself; and the better you are prepared for self-defence the less likelihood there is that you will be called upon to defend yourself." (Cheers.)

A valuable remark was made by Lieut.-Col. Tyrwhitt, M.P., in the course of the speech which he delivered later in the evening. Referring to the objections frequently taken by business men to the militia force, he observed that these were the very men who should be the heartiest in assisting that force, for their interests are more vulnerable than those of others, and would be the first to suffer in the event of war. It needed but common sense for these people to see to it that their defenders were in an efficient condition, he said.

COLONEL HERBERT INJURED.

The Naval and Military Record contains a note of a serious accident to our former Major-General, who is known in Britain as Col. Herbert, in command of the 2nd Batt. Grenadier Guards. He was out with his regiment on Thursday, Oct. 28, near Burnham Beeches, when his horse bolted, and running against a tree, threw