

urally they become very critical, particularly in view of the fact that our war expenditure is so exceedingly heavy. The expenditures in Military District No. 6 will bear a very thorough investigation. I think that the minister will find upon examination that a great many men could be eliminated from the list and the expenditure materially reduced.

Mr. VERVILLE: I wish to call the attention of the minister to certain things that have happened at public meetings in Winnipeg, Sydney and Toronto. I would like the minister to tell the committee what attitude soldiers are supposed to adopt in respect to their attendance at public meetings. I quote the following paragraph from the King's Regulations:

An officer or soldier is forbidden to institute or take part in any meetings, demonstrations, or processions, for party or political purposes, in barracks, quarters, camps, or their vicinity. Under no circumstances whatever will he attend such meetings, wherever held, in uniform.

If these regulations are not applicable to the soldier who has returned from the front, he may lose that respect on the part of the people that he has justly acquired by his services on the other side. Any one who wishes to command respect must himself respect others. We know what a group of men are likely to do when they meet together; we know what they did in Toronto—some officers themselves let them do it. I am very much afraid that sometime the people will bring back to their senses men who act in that way. I bring this matter up because I am desirous that soldiers who return from the other side shall be respected—and surely they cannot be respected if they themselves do not respect the freedom of this country. In Winnipeg a meeting was held; whether it was conscriptionist or anti-conscriptionist makes no difference. A large group of soldiers broke up the meeting—my hon. friend knows about it as well as I do. In Toronto they even went into the Labour Temple and broke almost everything—my hon. friend knows about that, too. As to the occurrence in Sydney, I am credibly informed—I can prove it—that politicians in Sydney incited these poor soldiers to do what they did. I really believe that if the soldiers were left alone, they would not do anything of this kind; but if they are incited by politicians, as they were in Sydney, one cannot tell what may happen.

In Halifax there was no trouble because there was no meeting, but it was understood in that city that if they had decided

to hold a meeting they would be holding it regardless of the people who were there. My hon. friend can see the danger of that as well as I can. One man is, in certain circumstances, as good as another, and there is liable to be trouble. We want to avoid that in this country. The minister should give orders that the King's regulations must be observed, and if soldiers are not satisfied with any speech they may hear, all they have to do is to walk away. That is what we do ourselves: If we do not like the speech of some speaker, we walk away. This is a free country. In a very short time we shall engage in a political battle, and it would not be safe for soldiers to interrupt a meeting. If they were to do that, it would not be respectable for the country, for the soldiers or for the citizens. If we are going to engage in a political fight, the minister should ask the soldiers to abide by the King's regulations. Far be it from me to ask the minister to prevent soldiers from attending meetings. They are free citizens and they have a perfect right to attend meetings, but the minister should ask them to keep the peace. The minister knows that sometimes any one in uniform in a big meeting is like a red flag before a bull. It is often the case that, if a police officer is around, there is trouble. I do not believe there is one soldier who would go one step to disturb the peace unless he was incited by some politician behind him and for reasons that my hon. friend can imagine, to attack a man like myself. I am asking the minister what he intends to do. The matter was raised in this House, I believe by my hon. friend from Parry Sound (Mr. Arthurs) who asked if it was the intention to give to the soldiers on this side of the water the same orders as were given to our soldiers on the other side. From the experience we have had lately, it seems that matters are going to get worse and worse, and if it is possible to avoid that, it would be better for the country, better for the soldier and better for the citizen at large.

Mr. ARTHURS: The hon. gentleman (Mr. Verville) said that I drew the attention of the Government some time ago to the regulations imposed upon soldiers overseas in regard to their attending public meetings in uniform. Soldiers in uniform in Canada are largely men who have returned from the front wounded and who, on account of the wounds they have received on the battlefield, are of no further service to their country at the front. Those men are in uniform, not ba-