

around a bit and got on the right side of some subordinate official, I could get the information in that way. If an officer in the British service was not entitled to see the new rifle, I was not going to poke around any back door at Enfield to obtain the information. The year before last the rifle was in an experimental stage. The British War Office have been experimenting with it ever since, and it is a failure as a war rifle.

This is the opinion of the British War Office in regard to the aperture sight:

The aperture sight possesses two main advantages: (a) As the eye looks through, and not at, the backsight, it is not strained by the constant effort to focus itself on an object very near to it, as is the case with the open backsight. (b) As the sight can be placed quite close to the firer's eye, the sight radius (that is, the distance between fore and backsight) can be considerably increased. It is much easier to point a long ruler accurately at a distant object than a short one, and the same principle holds good in the case of a rifle. It is thus much easier to align a rifle which has a long sight radius.

It goes on to show how this will check wild firing. There are a dozen other advantages of the aperture sight over the open sight to which it is not necessary for me to refer to here, other than this. Those of us who are getting on in years, find considerable difficulty on account of the blur in aligning with the open sight. With the aperture sight, the old eye can pick up the target just as accurately and just as clearly as the young eye can.

The action is not that of the National Rifle Association; it is the arbitrary action of the British War Office. The only people who can possibly be hurt by it are the riflemen of the Dominion of Canada. So far as I am concerned, for a great many years, we have made every concession in regard to the rifle trouble, and in every instance our contention has been upheld by the riflemen of Great Britain, as distinct from the War Office. The former are standing by us in demanding that the aperture sight be used. After discussing the matter, we have come to the decision that Canada is to-day prepared to lend to the British riflemen sufficient rifles for this season, in the hope that by next year they will have got what the British War Office frankly admits is the only sight that should be used. In that way the British riflemen will not be taken at a disadvantage for this season, and they can return the rifles later. There is no need, however, to lend these rifles, as the Birmingham Small Arms Company can supply the British War Office

[Mr. S. Hughes.]

with any aperture sights for every rifle in Great Britain. Therefore, in enacting this arbitrary rule, the British War Office can have only one possible object in view, and that is to exclude the Canadian team from competing at Bisley or to force the Canadian team to use the obsolete Lee-Enfield rifle with the open sight. Why should the British War Office force an arbitrary rule upon the National Rifle Association to the detriment of the Canadian team, and why should the Canadian team and Canadian volunteer bow to such a ruling without resenting it and standing to his weapon? We intend to stand by our rifle. We have used the aperture sight since 1909, and it is now part and parcel of our rifle. The British War Office know that we have no open sight on our rifle; and, so far as I am concerned, I do not propose to change it.

Mr. F. B. CARVELL: It is so seldom that I can entirely agree with the hon. Minister of Militia that I feel I would not be doing myself justice, let alone the hon. minister, if I were to remain silent in such a case as this. I heartily congratulate the hon. minister on the manly stand which he has taken in this matter. It is a well known matter of history to hon. members who have been for some years in this House that the Minister of Militia has made no change of front in connection with the rifle now under discussion, but is now in exactly the same position in which he was at the beginning. He stood by the Ross rifle when it required some courage on the part of a gentleman in his position to do so. He has stood by it since he has been in power. I am glad to know that he is standing by it now, and I am sure he will win, not because of his courage in standing by it, but because he is right.

I am entirely out of harmony with my hon. friend in regard to the large amount of money he is going to spend in Canada on the militia. I am entirely in harmony with him so far as the encouragement of rifle shooting is concerned. In my opinion, the only reason, in the final analysis, for spending money on the militia of Canada is to teach men to handle a rifle or a piece of artillery. We all hope the time will not come when he will need to use it, but a soldier who does not know how to use a rifle is about the most useless piece of humanity, when it comes to time of trouble, that one could imagine. You want a little drill, of course, a little training, perhaps a good deal of organization, but above all you want to have your men trained to handle a rifle.