

On my return to Ottawa my attention has been directed to recent public utterances of Sir Arthur Currie. Several of his charges against the government of which I was the head are rather stale and have been effectively ~~and~~ answered in Parliament on more than one occasion. The rest consist of sweeping assertions of a general character for which there is little, if any, foundation. He avers that the Government deliberately ignored and disregarded expert advice. On the contrary it sought expert opinion on every problem of the war and brought to Ottawa the most experienced authorities on every important question. When experts differed, as not infrequently happened - (as sometimes happened among military experts overseas, with respect to conduct of the war, as Sir Arthur Currie will remember) the Government was obliged to accept that opinion which seemed most reasonable and practical.

As to the Ross rifle, Sir Arthur Currie seems to forget that many years before the war that rifle was adopted, after very careful consideration, by Sir Wilfred Laurier's Government, of which Sir Arthur himself was a strong supporter. The action of that Government was ratified and confirmed by Parliament and a factory for the production of the rifle was established. If Sir Arthur, who was then prominent in military circles, made any protest against the adoption of the rifle his voice did not reach the general public. When war broke out the Ross was the standard rifle of the Canadian army and the only rifle that could be manufactured in this country. Then and for long after the Canadian army must be armed with the Ross rifle or with none. For accuracy of shooting it was unsurpassed but its construction in some respects proved to be unsuited to the severe conditions of warfare in France. Also, a prejudice arose against the rifle by reason of the supply to the Canadian soldiers of defective or unsuitable ammunition. When these conditions were made clear to the Government the Ross rifle was replaced by the Lee Enfield. But, in corroboration of Sir Arthur Currie's statement that he "does not know all about the expenditures of the war", it may be of interest for me to add, before I drop the matter that the substitution of the one rifle for the other was at the expense of the British Government, the British authorities accepting the Ross Rifles turned over to them in payment for the Lee Enfields. Sir Arthur is as curiously astray with respect to waste in the supply of equipment. The British army authorities, for obvious reasons,