

sent a cost of upwards of \$30 for the rifle in Canada, or \$5 more than the Ross rifle costs to-day. I might point out that as late as 1904, the new short rifle was put into the hands of the soldiers in Great Britain at a cost of £4 11s. 4½d., which would represent a cost of at least \$23 in this country.

My good friend from Sherbrooke yesterday, as one gentleman remarked, had nothing to say and said it very badly. So far as the hon. member for East Hastings (Mr. Northrup) is concerned, he also had nothing to say, but he said it very well. He made the best of a bad job. I was sleeping most of the time, but I understood that the part of his speech that I did not hear very distinctly was also very good. I would like to correct him in one point, however. He spoke of the Ross rifle being tested with forty grains of cordite giving an explosive force of twenty-two tons. I think he will find that nearer to thirty or thirty-five tons. But that is a matter of detail which does not greatly concern us here.

I may point out that the Ross rifle has been in the hands of the soldiers of this country for some time and that over 50,000 of them have been issued. No rifle ever issued to troops has been subject to the criticism, the adverse, interested criticism, to which the Ross rifle has been subjected. And yet, Sir, it stands before the country to-day the peer of any short rifle in existence. The long Ross rifle is but recently out, only a few having been issued, but, so far as issued, they are meeting with favour on every hand. The slight defects, if you may call them defects, that were found to exist in Mark II are already overcome in that rifle. These defects I pointed out in the short barrel, the light barrel and the imperfect safety catch. I have already pointed out that, in the American rifle, they have an unsafe safety catch, whereas in Mark III Ross rifle we have overcome that difficulty absolutely and have an absolutely safe safety-catch. We have also introduced a few minor improvements, such as strong trigger guard and double trigger action. The old trigger action in Mark I is the best. It is the one we wanted from the beginning, but we could not get it adopted. But now we are getting into line with other nations and adopting it. We might have been the first to use it. With these improvements, Mark III rifle stands unsurpassed, unequalled, in the world to-day.

I have been charged further with toadying to the Minister of Militia and toadying to the Liberal party. One gentleman makes it a cause of criticism that I cross the floor of the House and actually sit down and talk to hon. gentlemen on the other side. Well, I have seen my leader (Mr. R. L. Borden) do that. I have even seen the hon. member for North Toronto (Mr. Foster) do that. And for myself, I may say that, when I want to talk to a gentle-

man, I am not afraid to talk to him in daylight. I do not go sneaking around the departments; I do not condemn a fellow member for walking across the floor and talking to a minister on business or on any subject. So, I do not accept censure from the very men in the Tory party, some of whom are accustomed to go to the departments of this government, sneaking round, asking favours and appointments—and getting them. Some of these are among the men who are attacking me in connection with this Ross rifle. I am not afraid to let the world know what I am doing. I have never found it advantageous to play the hypocrite. I am not under any obligation to the Prime Minister (Sir Wilfrid Laurier), the Minister of Militia (Sir Frederick Borden) or the whole Liberal party. I have treated them as gentlemen, but when they have gone astray I have not hesitated to let them feel the weight—whatever it might be, heavy or light—of my indignation. I have been a loyal follower, so far as I could be, of the leader of the opposition; and so long as the Conservative party takes a straight line I will follow it. But, as I have said, I owe no allegiance to any man that affects my allegiance to my own conscience. So, when the Conservative party departs from the course of right as they have done in this case, as they did on the Yukon question, and as they did on the Manitoba school question, I will not follow it. I owe allegiance to my own conscience first and to my constituents second. I am not afraid to stand on my record. And, should I choose to come back to parliament, after the next election, you will find the electors of Victoria and Halliburton will not hesitate to back up your humble servant. I do not know whether the hon. member for Sherbrooke will be able to say as much regarding his constituency. At all events, I will be able to look the hon. member for Sherbrooke, or his constituency, or my own constituency of Victoria and Haliburton in the face, without fear that it can ever be shown that I have played the sneak, trying to track down, or injure or ruin the reputation of a fellow member. If any member wished to attack me, he should have been loyal enough to come to me. He should have come and said to me: I understand you have been caught grafting and I have the data here against you; prepare to defend yourself and get out of it as well as you can. But I had to learn from the hon. member for Beauharnois (Mr. Bergeron) of the complaints that the hon. member was bringing this year and last year. I reasoned with the hon. member for Beauharnois. For weeks after, I could not convince him that I was not in it up to the neck. I explain this to show why I was so persistent in fighting this matter out in the Public Accounts Committee last year and this year, and why I propose fighting it out to the bitter end.