

army. Canadians are now becoming prominent in the imperial service, and I hope to see the day when a Canadian officer of the imperial army will command our militia force. I would be the first to hold up my hands for such a man. That is the kind of man I want to see in command of the militia. I know, and the minister knows, that political pressure has been brought to bear upon him to do things that he sometimes resisted, and that sometimes he had to submit to. It does not matter what party is in power, once you get this law on the statute-book, the politicians are not going to be easy until they force upon the country some friend of theirs, whether he be fit for the position or not. We on this side of the House, as true Canadians will support the minister in this splendid scheme for the strengthening of our military forces, but we want to take no chances, that there can be any manœuvring of any sort to prevent us keeping such a capable general officer commanding as we have now, or to prevent us from getting one equal to him from the imperial army. I was relieved to hear the minister say to-day that there would be a provision in the Bill, so that in case of war the command of the forces would be given to an imperial officer.

Mr. CLARKE. Do I understand that in case of war, if the general officer commanding was a Canadian, he would be superseded by an imperial officer?

Mr. TISDALE. That is the intention, I believe, and I cannot imagine any greater slur on Canadian officers. The imperial authorities have seen that danger of this move, but generous as they are in their dealings with us, they simply said: We tender our advice, you can go your own way but we will take care to remove one of the danger points, and we will take the precaution that we shall have a thoroughly competent officer in case of war. The Minister of Militia has conceded my argument, because he did say that it might be a long time before they would put this provision of the Act in force. If that be so, why should we bring up such a disturbing element? I am afraid that if we pass this provision, it will not be very long until we will find some one, who is perhaps incompetent, forcing his way to this position.

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. The hon. gentleman (Mr. Tisdale) stated that he knew that political pressure was exercised, and that the minister had to resist it.

Mr. TISDALE. Sometimes; yes.

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. I should like to know where there is not pressure of that kind brought to bear, whether it be in the British army, or in any other army of the world. And with reference to the British army, possibly it may not be improper for me to say that there is a very strong suspicion that influence, very much below the level of political influence, is exercised in re-

gard to appointments. The hon. gentleman (Mr. Tisdale) fears, that if we take this power to appoint a Canadian or a New Zealander or an Australian, or some one outside the charmed circle of the British army, political influence will be brought to bear. I should like to ask, Sir: Are we not fit to govern ourselves? Is it possible that we can govern ourselves in everything else but in this? The hon. gentleman (Mr. Tisdale) would be deeply offended if it were suggested that we in Canada were still unfit for self-government in any other respect.

If we are able to appoint a Deputy Minister of the Interior and a deputy minister of every other department, even to Deputy Minister of Militia, and are able ourselves to govern each of these great departments successfully, is it possible that we are unable to govern ourselves in the matter of defence? If it be true that we cannot, then the sooner we get the experience and learn to govern ourselves in this respect the better it will be for this country. This is one of the means by which we propose to acquire that experience. My hon. friend (Mr. Hughes) says:—Oh! but you can get a Canadian officer now. That is true, but he must perforce pass through the ordeal of being an imperial officer. While I have no objection whatever to an imperial officer, I do object to a restriction which will prevent us from utilizing, for instance, a man who has served with distinction in quelling rebellions in our own country or who has served with equal or greater distinction along with British officers on the battlefields of South Africa. I do not think that my hon. friend's position is well taken when he says that this is a most inopportune moment to raise this question. Why is it an inopportune moment? My hon. friend (Mr. Hughes) has not told us. I consider it an exceedingly opportune moment. I will say, without hesitation, that I have been strongly of the opinion for the last four years, during which time I have administered the affairs of the Militia Department, that that restriction ought to be removed, and I am happy that the hour has arrived during my administration, when that restriction will be removed.

Mr. HAGGART. It is removed only in time of peace.

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. I was coming to that. My hon. friend (Mr. Hughes) says that in time of war we are still to have the benefit of the services of an imperial officer. Certainly we are, how could it be otherwise? A provision will be introduced here, that when the Canadian militia is called out to serve in time of war, to serve jointly with the imperial forces, then His Majesty should have power to appoint a senior general officer who should command the joint army. What other provision than this could you have? It is absolutely essential that the King shall have