

be the first and, as far as possible, the undivided duty of general officers commanding-in-chief.

Page 12, section 27, part 2, as stated in paragraph 10 the primary duties of the generals commanding-in-chief—

‘Generals’ not ‘general.’

—will be the training and preparation of the regular and auxiliary forces for war. The discipline of all officers serving in the command, including the power of convening and confirming the sentences of general courts martial, will be vested in them. They will also deal with the promotions, transfers and retirements of regular officers up to the rank of major of the units territorialized in the district under their supervision.

Page 15, section 18, part 1. A selection board should be created composed of general officers commanding-in-chief, who should make a recommendation to the Secretary of State and the army council for all promotions and appointments of officers above the rank of captain, with the exception of officers of the general staff who should, as in Germany be centrally advised and administered.

Further to emphasize my statement in regard to retaining this power in England, I may say that, since the appointment of the commander in chief in 1793, they have never lessened the authority or control of the commander in chief so far as concerns the military branch in any material degree below that of our General Officer Commanding. If you go fully into the change made in 1870 and the reasons for it, you will find that it was to meet the conditions growing out of the magnitude of the army and the expenditures which its great size made necessary, but it did not weaken, as the hon. gentleman would have us believe, the power of the military authority in regard to the military branch for the purposes I am discussing and claiming. While the hon. gentleman can find the statement that the Secretary of State was to be put over the general, I defy him to show that the regulations were of the character he contends. The fact is that the regulations like this army council business were such that if the duties of each were properly performed if there was no interference by one part of the establishment with another, the whole was entirely under the command of the military branch, as we have it under our system.

Now, let me point to a very glaring dissimilarity between the ministers new scheme and the English scheme to which he says his is similar. Take the head and front of the great scheme, the defence committee itself. This committee does not attempt the selection of any one of its permanent members except the secretary. Let me read :

9. The permanent nucleus of the defence committee should consist of :

I. A permanent secretary who should be appointed for five years renewable at pleasure.

II. Under this, officials two naval officers selected by the admiralty, two military officers

chosen by the War Office and two Indian officers nominated by the Viceroy, with, if possible, one or more representatives of the colonies. These officers should not be of high rank and the duration of their appointment should be limited to two years.

This indicates the proper appreciation of such matters that is shown by those in charge of them in England. They do not desire to grasp power individually. It is one of the glories of their government, and one of the bulwarks of their national safety, that this spirit exists in England. Our minister, this ‘plain plebeian Canadian,’ not only proposes to nominate all the members of his militia council, but to have them under his control as well as any General Officer Commanding, or other commander if one is appointed. And more than that—what do you think? He limits their power to the giving of ‘advice.’ And, even at that, he may seem to fear that they may be too familiar, because he limits them to such matters as he may ask their advice about. The section says :

The Governor in Council may appoint a militia council to advise the ministers in regard to all matters relating to the militia—

It would be somewhat sensible if it stopped there, but it goes on—

—which may be referred to the council by the minister.

While I have shown that the minister committed himself in his speech absolutely to the militia council scheme, with the chief of the general staff for his principal military adviser, he had so little confidence in that scheme that he provided an alternative scheme with a General Officer Commanding to command the militia. He had so little confidence in his militia council scheme that he provided an alternative scheme, with a General Officer Commanding as commander of the militia, showing a want of confidence, on his own part, in the scheme of his own making, before he had even tried the first. Why, we heard him declare the other day that there was to be no commander-in-chief. Yet so fearful is he of this militia council scheme with these officers of the department nominated by him and under his control, that he puts an alternative in his Bill, which amounts, as I have said, to a vote of want of confidence in it, carried by himself before he has tried it—declaring with one breath that his scheme was similar to the English scheme, and at the same time providing that there might be a General Officer Commanding after all. Imagine a minister abolishing a system which has worked so well as our present scheme, and introducing in its place one of which he has so little knowledge that he dares not confine himself to it, and provides in the same Bill for an alternative if the other does not work. It would be laughable if it were not