

## DEFENCE OF CANADA.

DISCUSSION IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS ON THE EXPENDITURE OF \$3,000,000  
EXTRA ON ARMS AND EQUIPMENT OF THE MILITIA.

(Continued from last issue.)

**M**R. CASEY—Then as to the artillery guns, there is no doubt that the chief reliance of an army nowadays is in plenty of field artillery. The rifle is an absolute necessity, but, for the purpose of getting an advantage over an enemy, a plentiful supply of field artillery is necessary. If we were called upon to put a force into the field, I think it would be found that a rather large number of guns for the field artillery would have been a better investment than ordering all the magazine rifles at one time. As to guns of position, I think there are heavy guns at Quebec, a considerable number having been left by the British Government.

**MR. DICKEY**—Yes, and some in Halifax. They are muzzle loaders and of an old pattern, but they are very efficient guns when set up.

**MR. CASEY**—I remember them twenty years ago. I do not think the necessity for guns of position is very pressing. The gun that we require is one that can be taken about whenever it is required for use; and I cannot object, if we are going to make our force really efficient, to a reasonable expense in the way of field guns. I understand the hon. Minister to say that the guns are of the latest pattern?

**MR. DICKEY**—They are the Royal Horse Artillery guns.

**MR. CASEY**—Is there much difference in price between them and those it was originally intended to procure?

**MR. DICKEY**—A good deal. I will give the hon. gentleman the figures in a moment.

**MR. O'BRIEN**—While the hon. Minister is looking for the figures, I desire to say that I think it exceedingly questionable whether it is wise to get the newest pattern gun, because they require more accurate primings of the fuse than the old ones.

**MR. DICKEY**—The original estimate for 9-pounders, about \$3,000 apiece.

**MR. CASEY**—And these are about \$5,000 apiece?

**MR. DICKEY**—Yes.

**MR. CASEY**—The difference was only in the calibre?

**MR. DICKEY**—No; in style, too. These others were muzzle loaders.

**MR. CASEY**—It is always a question whether it would be better to get a large number of guns, even though not quite so good, rather than get a smaller number of a better gun. The ammunition, no doubt, will be more expensive also, so that the purchase of these better guns will involve a continuous expense. I rather fear that the twenty-four of them is a high number to get. Com-

ing to the saddlery and harness which the hon. gentleman proposes to get, I make that out about \$220,000.

**MR. DICKEY**—The amounts are \$59,000 for harness and \$106,000 for saddlery.

**MR. CASEY**—I thought that was \$160,000. That is a total of \$165,000. I am aware that all harness and saddlery and leather goods are much cheaper in Canada than in the Old Country. Was any attempt made to learn what these could be made for in Canada?

**MR. DICKEY**—Not that I know of.

**MR. CASEY**—I think that in that respect the hon. gentleman made a mistake in authorizing Col. Lake to buy without ascertaining the price for which these stores could be obtained here. No doubt the pattern will be peculiar, but our saddlers could make anything that they get orders for, and we should have the advantage of having the goods made at home, as well as the advantage of getting the goods at a low rate. I remember that this principle used to be carried so far in connection with the clothing of the volunteers, that very inferior scarlet cloth was used on the ground simply that it was of Canadian make. These items account for everything but a sum of a little over \$1,100,000. This is the amount which we are asked to vote without any particulars as to what is intended to be done with it. Of course, I do not suppose the Minister expects us to vote it in that shape, and will give us particulars before he expects the resolution to go through committee. Is he prepared to give now the particulars of the \$1,100,000?

**MR. DICKEY**—I have dealt with that subject already. I told the hon. gentleman that probably out of it the equipment would be furnished.

**MR. CASEY**—About \$200,000?

**MR. DICKEY**—Yes, roughly, and that as to the balance, I was not prepared to say what disposition would be made of it.

**MR. CASEY**—I do not think the Minister can expect that much money to be put in his hands without knowing what he thinks of doing with it. Now, the Oliver equipment has been spoken of. I have seen that exhibited here by the inventor during the session. I know the Oliver equipment is a very old story, it has been thirty years in existence, and he has never secured its adoption in the British army.

**MR. O'BRIEN**—So much the worse for the British army.

**MR. CASEY**—At all events, the experts in whose judgment we trust for guns, harness, saddlery and all these things, have never

seen fit to adopt the Oliver equipment; and I should not fancy, from what I have seen of it myself, that it was the most comfortable thing in the world to wear. I have never worn it, but I have worn the old knapsack, and carried my duds and my grub, too, along with it.

**MR. O'BRIEN**—You did not carry your grub in the old knapsack, surely.

**MR. CASEY**—No, I carried part of my grub inwardly, and the rest of it in my haversack. I do not think we should vote anything for equipment until the Government are prepared with a plan of what equipment they intend to purchase. They should take the House fully into their confidence about these matters, just as the Minister of Public Works is compelled to take us into his confidence when he proposes to build a Government building, or a canal, or anything of that sort. I say that at the present time, when there are only a few hours between now and prorogation, even with the explanation which the Minister does not seem able to give us, it would be out of the question to vote \$3,000,000. While I sympathize heartily with the position of the volunteers, I hardly see my way to condone the course the Government have taken in regard to this matter, nor can I bring myself to give assent to everything the Government may spend out of the million and a half to two million dollars, without taking the House into their confidence, after they have come down and told the House that the thing is settled, the stores selected, and the contract made, so far as the Department of Militia is concerned, and all that we have got to do is to pay for it.

**MR. DICKEY**—If the hon. gentleman will carry his mind back to Christmas and New Year's, he will remember that things were not in a very pleasant state in some quarters of the world, and that Colonel Lake left Canada on the first week of January on this mission.

**MR. LAURIER**—Why was not this resolution brought down earlier? It has been on the Order paper since 25th February.

**MR. DICKEY**—The course of business in the House must answer the hon. gentleman.

**MR. CASEY**—If I look back not quite so far as Christmas, I can remember that there was a state of war even in this peaceful city, even within the peaceful walls of this building. There was war, not of the seven against Thebes, but a war of seven against somebody whom we shall not name. That is the principal war we had on at that time, that is, the war of the bolters. However, I can understand to what the hon. gentleman refers, the war scare between England and the United States.

There is no doubt that we all did get an idea for a time, and I cannot say that it was perfectly groundless, that something or other might precipitate a war at any moment be-