

House of Commons Debates

FOURTH SESSION--TENTH PARLIAMENT

SPEECH

OF THE

HON. SIR FREDERICK BORDEN, M.P.

ON

THE ROSS RIFLE

OTTAWA, THURSDAY, MAY 21, 1908.

Hon. Sir FREDERICK BORDEN (Minister of Militia). It can scarcely be truly said, Mr. Speaker, of the hon. gentleman's performance that he was 'all things by turns and nothing long.' He was all things by turns, but always very long. It would be difficult to say in which roll he was most interesting—whether as a Heaven-born patriot, as he declared himself in the opening of his speech, or as a humorist, in which mood he seemed disposed to close his remarks. But though his peroration may have been really genuinely humorous and amusing to himself, I doubt if any one else in this House fairly appreciated it. The hon. gentleman has succeeded at last in carrying his point with his party. He has apparently been strong enough to convince his party that it is a desirable thing—

Mr. SAM HUGHES. Pardon me, please.

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN—a portion of his party—that it is a desirable thing in the interests of that party and in the interests of the country that this question of arming the militia should be brought down to the level—the low level from the hon. gentleman's point of view—of party warfare. The hon. gentleman talks about patriotism. He says that he is actuated by a strong patriotic desire—and by that alone—to benefit his country and to benefit the militia, of which he is an officer. But I doubt very much if he will be able to convince right-thinking men, right-thinking officers of the force to which he belongs,

that this is the truest and best way of exhibiting his love for the country and his love for the militia force. He may feel that his efforts have been rewarded to some extent. I think they have. If the desire to throw doubt upon a weapon with which the army of this country is to be armed, if that, in his mind, is the highest thing to be sought after, the thing which a member of parliament and an officer occupying a prominent position in the militia, should work for above and beyond everything, then I think the hon. gentleman may congratulate himself upon a certain measure of success, because, with the aid of certain newspapers—which, in some cases, he has inspired, and which, in more frequent instances have inspired him—the hon. gentleman has been able to cause a condition of doubt to exist among the militia force of this country; a condition, however, which, I am happy to be able to say, is very rapidly disappearing since the reports of the investigation which has taken place before the Public Accounts Committee during the past year and a half have been thoroughly circulated among the people. The hon. gentleman has taken a long time to get his courage up to the sticking point. He spent all last session asking questions—every day—

Mr. WORTHINGTON. Will the hon. gentleman (Sir Frederick Borden) allow me to say just here: the reason of the delay is due to his usual length of time in bringing down the reports we asked for, and the

length of time the public accounts kept the report before them.

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. I am not responsible for the Public Accounts Committee. I was willing to have the question reported here long ago. No, the hon. gentleman (Mr. Worthington) is entirely responsible.

Mr. WORTHINGTON. The hon. minister did not bring down these reports until within the last two months.

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. Well, two months. Here is an hon. gentleman burning with a desire to save his country. He was lamenting over the dangers which beset the people of this country and especially the militia—and here he has allowed, according to his own statement, two months to pass during which he should have been on his feet with the kind of impassioned eloquence we heard to-day, warning the House and the Country of the terrible disaster awaiting them.

I do not propose to follow this line of argument any longer. The hon. gentleman has occupied three hours and a quarter, and I shall try not to emulate him in this respect at least. I propose in view of the seriousness of the resolution which is now before the House, to address myself to two or three points connected with this matter which I deem to be of importance. I do not, for a moment, intend to follow the hon. gentleman in his meanderings among the reports of all sorts of committees which are of more or less consequence—and generally of much less consequence than mine. However, before I take my seat, I shall refer specifically to the only three cases out of the whole number he has referred to in which the Ross rifle has been seriously attacked. And I propose to show that in each and all of these cases, the statement that any accident occurred, any blow out or anything that might have seriously menaced life, is absolutely without any foundation in fact. And I propose to do that by the record, and not by reading such papers as the hon. gentleman did, a paper the authority for which he could not state, purporting to be a report from the United States government as to the test of certain rifles from the Ross factory—

Mr. WORTHINGTON. If the hon. gentleman (Sir Frederick Borden) will pardon me. Somewhat like his little manicure rifle, he is going off at half-cock. This report came from the Springfield Armoury, and is signed by competent and creditable men, and they state that Sir Charles Ross was present and asked to have his rifle inspected.

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. I say that this House has no evidence before it beyond the hon. gentleman's statement, and—to return him the compliment that he paid me—

I do not value that statement one single particle; it is not good enough. Now, if the hon. gentleman is going to bring down ordinance reports, let him bring them down with the proper seal upon them, as has been done by the Militia Department in every case; every paper is there to speak for itself; and it bears upon its face the authority from which emanated. I do not come here, as the hon. gentleman did, with a typewritten paper which he tells us may have come from the Springfield Arsenal in the United States, but concerning which he has given us no proof that it came from there.

Mr. WORTHINGTON. Does the hon. gentleman deny the accuracy of the report?

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. I am not denying it or affirming it; I say that that paper has no business to be brought into this House, because the hon. gentleman is not able to say where it came from.

Mr. SAM HUGHES. I may say that the report of the Springfield committee on the Ross rifle is infinitely better than the Springfield report on their own rifle, as I shall show in due time.

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. I would like, at the earliest moment, to set the mind of the hon. gentlemen (Mr. Worthington) at rest with reference to the dangerous character of this rifle, which he so hates, and in connection with which he has become a sort of monomaniac; because he has done nothing else for two years, he has thought of nothing else, spoke of nothing else, apparently knows nothing else—and very little about that. But I want to make a statement at once, which I hope may have a soothing effect upon his mania, and that is that I will undertake to bring the evidence of men competent to judge to prove that there is not a single rifle which has been delivered and accepted by the Department of Militia from the Ross rifle factory—except the rifle which his friend tampered with at Eastman at a meeting at which the hon. gentleman was present and—

Mr. WORTHINGTON. I was not present; I was not within twenty miles.

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. The hon. gentleman said he was.

Mr. WORTHINGTON. I said I was in the vicinity.

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. He knew it had been tampered with, and did not like to go. I say that with the exception of that one rifle, which was tampered with in that way—and I will show in a few minutes what was done with that rifle so tampered with—there is not one single rifle of the 42,000 which have not been delivered that

is not a service rifle and is not fit and safe to use in the Canadian army if it were necessary to use it. I make that statement here and accept full responsibility for it. I make it upon the report which I hold of those who are competent to advise me as to matters of that kind. I shall read the particulars necessary to show that of those rifles which are not now serviceable there is not one which cannot be made serviceable with a very slight expenditure. Yet we have this hon. gentleman trying to terrify the militia, trying to persuade the House that we have purchased 52,000 rifles which are only fit to be placed on the scrap heap. I assure you there is not one word of truth in it.

Mr. WORTHINGTON. The Auditor General said it.

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. The Auditor General did not say it—and the Auditor General, anyway, is about as good an authority as the hon. gentleman himself upon the usefulness of a rifle. I would ask the House to consider with me one or two questions that I propose to put to myself. First, what justification was there for adopting the policy of securing a rifle manufactory for Canada? I propose, in that connection, to read two or three short extracts from the proceedings of the Colonial, or Imperial Conference as it is now called, or 1907. I have here a paper which was laid before that conference, having been brought down by the Secretary of State for War. I shall quote from it briefly, giving only the salient words of each paragraph:

"1. No review of the strategical conditions of the British Empire, even when such a review is limited to the purely military aspects of the question, can be undertaken without admitting as a first and fundamental principle that the maintenance of the empire rests primarily upon supremacy at sea.

2. The second great principle which must govern the military organization of the empire is that each portion of it should, as far as possible, maintain sufficient troops for self defence.

3. The third principle to be borne in mind is this consideration of the military requirements of the empire is the great one of mutual support at the time of emergency. It is evident that under certain circumstances the land forces of the various territories of the empire may be impelled by considerations both of safety and sentiment to act together in some great conflict which may imperil our national existence. Should such a situation arise it would be impossible to overrate the advantage of having in every case a system of military organization capable of being readily assimilated to that of the many other contingents which would compose the Imperial army."

Under the heading:

PATTERNS AND PROVISION OF EQUIPMENT AND STORES FOR COLONIAL FORCES.

It says:

"It is essential that the small arms supplied to any force which may have to act side by side with troops from the United Kingdom should fire the same ammunition as that supplied to the latter."

And again:

"It is most desirable that the area of supply of the warlike store under reference should be as wide as possible, and, therefore, the colonial governments should be urged to arrange for local manufacture and provision, rather than to rely on the resources of the United Kingdom."

It seems to me, taking the highest point of view, that we have in that paper evidence that it was the duty of this country to undertake to manufacture for itself the small arms required by it. The hon. gentleman (Mr. Worthington), in a sneering way, referred to the alleged fact that the right hon. the Prime Minister had refused to contribute to the imperial navy. The hon. gentleman did not say whether he himself would be prepared to advocate the voting of a large sum of money to support the navy. We on this side of the House have taken the view that it is our duty in Canada to assist the mother country, as least to the extent of being able, in the first instance to defend ourselves on our own soil; and we have taken a further step, and said to the mother country that we do not wish her over-burdened tax-payers any longer to pay for supporting garrisons in Canada, and that we in future, as we are doing today, will continue to relieve her from all expenditures of that kind; and while we are not able at the present moment to construct a navy, and while we are not disposed to pay any money to support a navy, in the control of which we have no direct interest, we are prepared to do our full duty as far as concerns maintaining control of our own territory and being able to defend that territory. One of the ways in which to do that is to be prepared to manufacture for ourselves our own small arms. This is the first step then, Mr. Speaker, and the first ground I give in justification of the policy which we have adopted.

In February of last year, on a similar occasion to this, I made a statement, and I shall trouble the House by reading very briefly from that statement to show other reasons which moved me and which influenced the government to undertake the responsibility of manufacturing our own small arms or having them manufactured in this country. Let me tell him that in the year 1900, when this government wanted to purchase rifles through the imperial government, it was impossible to secure a thou-

sand rifles in Great Britain.' It will be remembered that this was during the South African war, at a moment when we wanted 10,000 rifles. We had sent away to South Africa a large number of the rifles we had—and we had all too few—and it was desired to purchase 10,000 yet, not 1,000 could be procured in the whole United Kingdom.

"It was impossible to secure a thousand rifles in Great Britain during the time of the South African war, and I thought that it was the duty of this government, under the circumstances, to make as soon as possible some arrangement by which our rifles could be manufactured in Canada. I was in England in 1900 and went to the Birmingham small arms people and tried to induce the company to come to Canada. I quite recognize the desirability of our having, if possible, precisely the same rifle in Canada as is used by the British army, because of the militia of this country should ever be called out for war, it would be better that we should have the same rifles. We have one, however, which differs so little from the Lee-Enfield that there will be no trouble on that score.

It was found impossible to prevail upon the Birmingham Small Arms Company, or any other small arms manufacturer in England, to come out here and start a factory. About that time Sir Charles Ross happened to be here. He had not then come to Canada for the first time, but, as the hon. gentleman must know, had been living in British Columbia, and had spent a great deal of money there in developing water-powers and establishing electrical works. He was introduced to me, I think, by Mr. Mackenzie of Messrs. Mackenzie & Mann, and brought other letters from the most reputable men in Canada. He explained to me that he had a rifle factory in the United States, and was selling sporting rifles, rifles similar to what are being manufactured here now. He said that he would be willing to establish a factory to manufacture rifles for Canada with the same bore and to use the same cartridge as the Lee-Enfield rifle. It seemed to me that it was a patriotic thing on my part to recommend and on the part of the government to accept this opportunity to secure a factory which would turn out rifles for Canada."

These are the grounds then, Mr. Speaker, upon which I justify the adoption of the policy of manufacturing, or having manufactured in Canada, our own rifles. Somebody may say: Why did you not construct a factory yourself; why did you not become your own manufacturer? I frankly admit that that may be a question fairly open to argument. We took the view that it would be better to allow Sir Charles Ross to manufacture his own rifle and so we adopted that policy. We knew that he had the capital to do it, we thought that the better course, we made a contract with him, as I shall show presently, and he pro-

ceeded to construct his factory. What was the rifle that we agreed to adopt? I have already said that it was a rifle of the same calibre or the same bore as the Lee-Enfield. It had a slightly different action but the difference was not serious. Of course the parts of that rifle would not be interchangeable with those of the Lee-Enfield, but that is not a serious drawback.

Mr. SAM HUGHES. There is no Lee-Enfield that is interchangeable with its neighbor.

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. So I believe. What was this rifle. It was known as the Mannlicher rifle, the rifle with which, as the hon. gentleman (Mr. Worthington) told us to-day, the whole Austrian army is armed. He said that that army was armed with that rifle in 1896. The British army was armed with the Lee-Enfield before 1896; so that, that is not a very grave or serious complaint against it. The Mannlicher, I believe, is considered to be as good a rifle as there is in the world. At any rate, Austria is a warlike nation and I think we may fairly assume that the rifle that is good enough to satisfy the generals of the Austrian army may be good enough to satisfy the militia of this country. What did I proceed to do? Knowing this, I proceeded, after consulting my colleagues, to bring together a committee of the best men I could find in Canada, as I believed, to examine this rifle and report to me as to whether it was a fit rifle to adopt in this country. Whom did I appoint on that committee?—General Otter, now the chief of the general staff, one of the most distinguished Canadian soldiers, a man whose name is honored not only in his own country but in England as well, a man who was offered, the other day, one of the best commands in the gift of the War Office in England; Colonel Gibson, for many years an active militiaman, a man who took his part in repelling the Fenian invasion and a man who was for years and years the president of the Dominion Rifle Association. Colonel Hughes, who is well known in this House and the country, was the third man whom I appointed on that committee.

Mr. FOWLER. Colonel Sam?

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. Colonel Sam. There is no other Colonel Hughes.

Mr. SAM HUGHES. Yes, pardon me; there are two more in the same family.

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. When you speak of Colonel Hughes in this country every one knows who is meant. Colonel Anderson of the Department of Marine and Fisheries, a distinguished engineer, and Major Gaudet, at the head of the Dominion arsenal, a man of great experience and possessing technical knowledge, were also members of this committee. Those gentlemen met, the Ross rifle was handed to them,

they reported, and I suppose I will have to trouble the House, very briefly, with an extract from their report. I am going to read the whole of the opinion expressed; I am not going to follow the example given us to-night of simply picking out things that suit my case and omitting those that do not. This is the opinion:

"On the whole, the board find that the Ross rifle has features which in their opinion, afford advantages over the Lee-Enfield. All agree that the straight pull is a very important advantage over the Lee-Enfield action. The sample mechanism is evidenced by the fact that the breach can be taken entirely apart and put together again without tool other than an ordinary knife, and the operation of taking apart and assembling the parts, takes considerably less time than the Lee-Enfield. Another important advantage, is in the strength of the breech mechanism, while the limit of the Lee-Enfield is restricted. It may be said that any increase of velocity which is ever likely to be required, can with absolute safety be obtained in the case of the Ross rifle.

The Ross rifle is approximately a pound lighter than the Lee-Enfield.

The chief objection or difficulty which was found in connection with the tests to which the Ross rifle was subjected, was brought out in the 'endurance test.' While in firing 1,300 rounds out of each of the rifles, the Lee-Enfield stood the test quite satisfactorily. It was found that after heating, the breach of the Ross rifle closed with more or less difficulty, the action being very stiff with occasional jamming besides which a possibility of 'double loading' exists.

Were this an inherent objection to this rifle, independent of details of mechanism, the board would regard it as a very serious matter, but Sir Charles Ross states, that any difficulty in this respect can be effectually obviated, and the board submit herewith a memorandum (exhibit 'D') from him in reference to this point which in his opinion, affords an explanation of the unsatisfactory result of this test, and the manner in which the same may be overcome.

Speaking generally the board believe that the Ross rifle has features which are a positive advantage over the Lee-Enfield, while it is contended by Sir Charles Ross that he can easily remedy any of the drawbacks which have been pointed out.

The rifle has been on the ranges during the week of the Dominion Rifle Association meeting—

And yet the hon. member for Sherbrooke said that it was never on a range.

—and has been examined and fired more or less by many riflemen of experience, and while it is not suggested that any conclusive testimony has been afforded from such desultory examinations and tests, it is significant of the favorable impression of riflemen, that no adverse comments were known

to have been made, and all seemed to be pleased with the action of the rifle."

Here is what Sir Charles Ross said in that connection.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. Before the minister leaves that, there seems to be a good deal left out of this report, a good deal of responsibility left for the minister before adopting the rifle. Because, while they say that certain defects exist, they do not themselves point out that they can be remedied, but merely declare the opinion of Sir Charles Ross to that effect. There is one paragraph which the minister did not read; it is rather significant:

"The board do not profess to pronounce upon the question of a complete remedy of this objection, but having called attention to it, assume that due precaution and provision with reference thereto will be taken in the event of the rifle being adopted."

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. I see I left that out and the clause following also.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. That is a very important clause. I would like to ask what was done along that line before the rifle was adopted?

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. Well, the officers of the department were consulted and Gaudet, who was an expert and had taken a course in England just before that, was consulted with reference to the matter.

Mr. FOSTER. Gaudet is the ammunition man?

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. Yes.

Mr. NORTHROP. Is there any written report?

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. I do not think there is any memorandum on the subject. If there is it has been brought down.

Mr. NORTHROP. It has not been brought down.

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. Well, then, there is not any. A great deal of the negotiations, a good deal of the advice obtained directly from the officers of course was verbal. It was the result of consultation between Gaudet, Cotton, my late deputy, myself and others.

Mr. SAM HUGHES. The chief trouble at that time was because of cartridges sticking in the chamber.

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. Yes. There is one thing which was pointed out to me and I might mention it now since the question has been asked. The rapidity of fire of the Ross rifle is very much greater than that of the Lee-Enfield, and for that reason there is a great deal more liability to heating of the barrel and jamming. I wish to call the attention of the House, however, to Sir Charles Ross' statement, and I will only read the concluding part of it with

reference to this matter, because it has a bearing upon the question of remedying all the defects:

"We particularly draw attention to the fact that the trouble is only a small detail of manufacturing owing to the difference in the shells, not having had the advantage of testing with government cartridges and we undertake to meet all the necessary requirements on this point (Sgd.) Charles Ross. (Sgd.) J. A. BENNETT."

Bennett was his manager.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. Is that report in the printed evidence?

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. Yes, you will find it at page 204. Then, of course, there are letters from Colonel Hughes and from Colonel Anderson which I will not delay the House by reading. The hon. member (Mr. Worthington) read to-day certain alleged reports from the Springfield arsenals. I have already referred to them and given my opinion that they are not of much value until their authenticity is proven. So far as I am concerned I am not prepared to accept their authenticity. The hon. member also referred to what he called War Office reports and Hythe tests, and he ventured to say that when I was asked a certain question I had denied that any communication had been received from the War Office with reference to the Ross rifle. If the hon. member had been fair enough to read my answer he would have seen I had done nothing of the kind. I said there had been a communication and that it was marked 'secret,' and I referred to the nature of the communication. The communication points out that it might be undesirable to adopt a rifle which was not precisely like the Lee-Enfield because two forces fighting together in the field might require different parts and their armourers might be serving out parts for only one kind of rifle. That is a difficulty that no doubt would exist, but so far as the Ross rifle is concerned there was no very great difficulty about it. As I pointed out in 1902 when this matter was discussed in the colonial conference, the rifle is so simple that it is quite easy for a man, or at any rate for a sergeant in each company or in each regiment, to carry with him the necessary spare parts. That was pointed out and it was not denied; in fact, it was affirmed. What was denied was a statement which appeared in a newspaper in this city, and which the hon. member (Mr. Worthington) seems disposed to adhere to notwithstanding my contradiction, and which was that the Ross rifle had been tested at Hythe. I gave the specific statement on that head: That neither Sir Charles Ross nor his agent nor anybody for him nor any one on behalf of this government had ever handed over to any of the authorities at Hythe any rifles whatever for the purpose of testing them.

In that connection I was practically charged—and this will illustrate the animus which actuates the opponents of this rifle—I was charged with having purloined from the parliamentary library a book which was said to have been there and to have mysteriously disappeared. I was able to produce here from the librarian a distinct statement that no such report from the War Office had ever been in the library and that every report of the year mentioned or of recent years that ever had been in the library was there still. I mention this again to show the animus behind all this and the unfairness of this crusade, for it is nothing else. A newspaper stated—inspired I believe by the hon. member—the Ottawa 'Citizen,' stated that I had refused to bring down a report sent here by the War Office with regard to this rifle and that such report had been kept off the files. And I was able to bring here to my desk the next day the return as I laid it on the table as long ago as March, 1907, and showed to this House the full report of the War Office just as it was sent to the Department of Militia, and I was able to show further that I had in the speech which I made in this House in January, 1907, referred to this very report as having been received and stated I was going to bring it down to the House. It is just as well perhaps to take note of these things so that the House may discount a little bit the professions of patriotism put forward by the hon. member who moved this motion.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. Is this report of the War Office the report of the alleged trial or experiment at Hythe?

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. No, I am speaking now about the report made at the Woolwich Arsenal on rifles which I sent to the War Office for the purpose.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. What was the Hythe investigation?

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. I said that neither the department nor Sir Charles Ross nor anybody for him ever sent any rifle there, and Sir Charles Ross assured me that it is an entire mistake to say that his rifle has ever been sent to Hythe or reported upon there.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. I suppose it might have been tested there although it was not sent by Sir Charles Ross. Does the hon. minister know whether the Ross rifle was tested although it was not tested under his auspices?

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. I would not say that it was not. It was about the time that the original rifle was handed to the government to be submitted to the committee which I spoke of a moment ago. I do not think there could have been such a test.

Mr. FOSTER. How many rifles have been

accepted for that report of the Woolwich test?

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. I could not say, but my impression is that there were very few. The report, I think, was received from the War Office in the autumn of 1906.

Mr. NORTHRUP. There were 14,000 rifles up to the end of 1906.

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. I may say that the rifle sent was the Mark II, and that was the rifle reported on.

Now, Mr. Speaker, another question which I would like to answer is: Was due care exercised in making the contract? Recently there has been a report, somewhat famous now, by a commission known as the Civil Service Commission, and in that report I find some more or less complimentary references to the Militia Department, which I hope to have an opportunity of dealing with some day before long. But incidentally, as a slight instalment of the good things given out to the Militia Department by that commission, it is stated that the contract was drafted by the contractor's solicitor. Now, in order to elicit information upon that point, the chairman of the commission, when he was examining the deputy Minister of Justice, Mr. Newcombe, with reference to the conduct of the Department of Justice, put certain questions; and I would like to read what took place:

"Q. You prepare all contracts entered into by the several departments which you are asked to put into legal form, I suppose?—A. We draft them all or revise the drafts prepared in the departments.

Q. We had before us this morning the Deputy Minister of Militia and Defence, and we were asking him some questions about the Ross rifle contract. Was that contract drafted in the Department of Justice?—A. I do not know where it was drafted, but we had a great many conferences over it. It was, I think, drafted preliminarily by Sir Charles Ross' solicitor."

This all the reason apparently that the Royal Commission had to jump at that conclusion.

"Q. Had he a solicitor acting for him?—A. Yes.

Q. In drafting these contracts, if it should appear they contained something that might be detrimental to the interests of Canada, would be your duty to go on with the drafting or call the attention of the department to the matter?—A. I would call the attention of the minister, or the officer from whom I was taking instructions, to any situation of that sort and ask him what was intended. As to the substance of the contract, I would not interfere with the policy, but would endeavor to see that any deficiencies that suggested themselves to me or any supposed provisions that I thought would not work with adequate security to the government, were called to his atten-

tion. Then, that being considered, I would take the policy of the contract from him and give effect to his intentions.

Q. You have nothing to do with the policy of the government.—A. No, so far as concerns the business of the departments.

By Mr. Fyische:

Q. I suppose there is such a thing in the government service as cultivating a habit of doubt or suspicion about everything?—

A. As far as I am concerned I have no suspicion. I point out to the government, or the minister, or the officer who is instructing me, what I suppose to be reasonable or what may work unreasonably, but the policy in regard to that is a matter for him to consider and settle.

I think it is abundantly clear from this that the deputy Minister of Justice would have considered himself in duty and in honour bound to call the attention of the minister to anything which he thought would not work well, but would work to the disadvantage of the country. He had nothing to do with the policy. Whether we should have a rifle factory or not was none of his business. But when a contract was to be made with Sir Charles Ross, the Deputy Minister of Justice stated that he felt it to be his duty to see that the government's interests were protected in every way. And yet in the face of that statement, we have the spectacle of a royal commission trying to stab and injure the department and the government by the casual statement, the unjustifiable statement, to which I have referred, that this contract was drafted by the contractor's solicitor. Now, I have a very definite recollection of what took place in connection with that contract. There were eight or ten or twelve different drafts, and time after time I took to council a draft to consult with my colleagues about; and in my room over and over again, there were present Sir Charles Ross, my deputy minister, the Deputy Minister of Justice, and on one or two occasions Sir Charles Ross had with him his solicitor. The idea was to get at a contract which would be fair; and I was determined, so far as I was concerned, to enter into no contract until I had the advice of the Department of Justice upon it. I got that advice, and I got it in the view expressed by the Deputy Minister of Justice that it was his duty to warn me if he saw anything in the contract that was unjust or improper.

Now, the contract provides:

"The contractor is to establish, at or near the City of Quebec, in Canada, a factory for the manufacture of rifles, with the necessary plant."

It is to be a Canadian factory, established at Quebec. The contractor undertakes to deliver a certain number of rifles in a certain length of time—only 12,000. He wanted to make a contract for a much larger number, but it was pointed out to

him that that would be impossible without taking a vote of money. He said: Well, if you cannot give me a contract for 100,000 or 60,000 or whatever it might be, then you must undertake to buy from my factory all the rifles you may require. Therefore the third provision of the contract stipulates that the government shall buy from the contractor. Surely there was nothing improvident or unfair in that. Here was a man going to invest half a million dollars or more in the manufacture of rifles in Canada, and you could not expect him to do that unless he had some guarantee of continuous patronage for a reasonable time at least.

In this third section there is a provision that, in case of war or a sudden necessity for a larger number than the contractor will be able to manufacture, he shall be given notice of the large requirements of the government and if unable to fill them, then the government would be at liberty to buy wherever it chose. I should not think that this was an improvident arrangement.

Then as to inspection, we have heard something about inspection and no doubt will hear more about it.

"The said rifle hereby contracted for shall, previous to delivery, be inspected by the inspector of small arms of the government, and if, after such inspection, the rifles be found up to sample, delivery will be taken."

All sorts of absurd statements have been made as to the want of proper care in this matter of inspection. Any one can understand that the inspection would be according to the custom and usage in such matters, and so it has been. This of course was a new undertaking in Canada, and it is possible that the inspection in all cases has not been so rigid as it ought to have been. But I can say without hesitation that during the last two years there has been no failure in that regard. I do not wish to blame anybody; I am here to take full responsibility for any mistake or error that may have been made by any officer in my department. But it was a new work they were undertaking and those errors, if there were any, were of the head rather than of the heart. These officers were undertaking new work, and I would not think of saying that every rifle which came out of that factory, any more than I would say of the Lee-Enfield or any other, had been thoroughly inspected and that nothing had been overlooked. There have been undoubtedly some defects discovered but they were only trifles and can be easily remedied. I am inclined to believe that a more rigid inspection—such an inspection as we are giving to-day—would have practically prevented the issue of any rifle which would show defects under ordinary usage. I am not claiming that this rifle is perfect or that every rifle we have received is absolutely

perfect. There is no perfect rifle in the world. I know more about rifles to-day than I did four or five years ago and not very much yet, but I have read enough to have learned that there is no perfect rifle in the world and that there is not any country to-day absolutely satisfied with its rifle. There is no rifle which satisfies every rifleman. Why, you will not find one rifleman in fifty satisfied with any rifle you may give him. Show him a rifle whether Lee-Enfield Mauser or Ross or what you like, show him any variety of sights you choose, and I venture to say he will want this to be changed or that, and tell you that if this or the other thing were done, it would be an absolutely perfect rifle. But these are small things and things which are not material. It is not a target rifle we have been buying. It is a rifle with which to arm the forces of Canada, and I repeat that every one which has been accepted is a rifle fit for service.

The next clause to which I want to call attention provides that if any changes are required, they can be obtained on giving notice. Clause 6 provides that if a few rifle be invented, the government shall have the right to have that rifle. It goes so far as to say that, in laying down his plant and machinery, the contractor shall provide the best facilities to enable him to manufacture any such new rifle.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. What is the system of inspection in Great Britain?

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. There is the upright view, which is the simplest form.

Mr. FOSTER. Give it to us colloquially.

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. The upright view is taking the rifle completely finished, without any reference to its component parts, and testing it. The other is the government view, as it is called in England. That means the inspection of every part of the rifle or of the important parts, and that is the inspection which has been followed here. The rifle is inspected during the process of manufacture in all its essential and important component parts and marked by the inspector, so that he will know, if that rifle is refused and sent back, whether he has seen it before or not. That is the inspection followed to-day and it is a fairly good inspection—perhaps not quite as good as or up to the government view inspection in England, but Major Pym who knows his business fairly well, thinks it is absolutely satisfactory.

Mr. FOSTER. Does not the British government inspect as to the interchangeability of parts?

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. No.

Mr. FOSTER. Are you sure of that?

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. Unless very recently. The Lee-Enfield rifles, which we

have, are not interchangeable in their parts. The Ross rifle is inspected as to interchangeability. This is one of the strongest claims but Major Pym has reported that it would not be safe to rely entirely on its interchangeability.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. What is the difficulty about interchangeability?

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. When you are dealing with the two-thousandth or five-thousandth part of an inch in the circumference or thickness of a part, you see how difficult it is.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. I have understood that in large manufactories of watches, for example, the parts are made interchangeable. One would suppose that a watch would have as minute parts as any in a rifle. So if this can be done in watches, I do not see that there should be any great difficulty about it in rifles.

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. I agree with the hon. gentleman in that. I think they ought to be interchangeable, and I think any difficulty that exists in the way of making them so will be overcome. I am stating the facts as they are. I have no desire or intention—

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. I was only asking for information.

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. The parts are interchangeable in many of them, but I would not like to say they are all interchangeable.

Now, we come to the question of the price. We heard a good deal about the prices at which rifles could be obtained from some dealers of whom I never heard before. I notice that as they were quoted they indicated purchase on upright view. I am not going to say that the firms whose quotations were read are not the best in the world. I do not know. I am going to quote prices which I do know. The price of the latest pattern of the British rifle, made in the government factory—mark you, made in the government factory—is £4 5s, or, laid down in Canada free of all charges, \$27.35. This makes no allowance for trade expenses or profit, and to cover these you should make an allowance of about 35 per cent.

Mr. FOSTER. Does that include inspection?

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. Yes, it includes inspection, which is 6 per cent. The same rifle, if purchased from the trade, would cost approximately \$6.25 more, or \$33.60. Now, that is absolutely authentic information.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. Does that include duty?

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. Yes, 20 per cent. The hon. member for North Toronto

(Mr. Foster) will remember that when he was Finance Minister a large number of rifles were purchased in England. Part of them were from the War Office—that is, the government factory—and part were bought from the trade. I will deal with those bought from the trade:

	£	s.	d.
Birmingham Small Arms Factory,			
13,000; and from another firm,			
8,150	4	0	0
Departmental expenses, &c.	0	4	5
Case, freight, &c.	0	2	3
Carriage	0	0	9
Total	4	7	5

Cost laid down in Canada in 1896, \$22, or with duty—20 per cent—added, \$26.40.

Now, it is only fair to say at once that that includes inspection. The rifle bought in 1896 under my hon. friend (Mr. Foster) was bought on most favorable terms, as I shall show in a moment. It would have cost \$26.40 if there had been the usual duty which now exists, as against \$26.90—because I am going to add the cost of inspection, \$1.90. So that the cost of the Ross rifle to this government to-day is \$26.90, and the Lee-Enfield imported in 1896 would have cost to-day \$26.40, or a difference of 50 cents in favor of the Lee-Enfield.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. Will the hon. gentleman permit me a question? The way he deals with the duty is a little confusing to me, though there may be a perfect explanation of it. As I understand, in making the computation he takes into account the duty on rifles coming from Great Britain, but in considering the case of the Ross rifle, as it is to-day, he does not, as far as I can understand, take into consideration the duty on materials brought into this country for the manufacture of that rifle.

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. I have not done so.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. It would seem that if you add the duty in one case you ought to add it in the other. I would suggest that.

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. I think the duty would be very small, because notwithstanding all that has been said here to-day, there are no finished parts imported.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. But to make a fair comparison, I should think the duty, whatever it is, should be taken into account.

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. I could have the computation made in that way. It would not materially change the figures. I want to show how the price at which these rifles were bought in 1896 happened to be very favorable. I have discussed this matter with General Lake, who, I think was employed to purchase these rifles, and I have from him this memo, which I have liberty to read:

"Ottawa, January, 29, 1907.

The Hon. the Minister of Militia and Defence.

You asked me to-day what reduction in price of the Lee-Enfield rifle had followed the decision of the War Office to revise, in 1896, the contract rates paid to the trade in England, upon the ground that the primary cost of installing machinery to manufacture the magazine rifle had by that time been recouped by the trade.

Speaking from memory, I said it was about 10 shillings, but that I could not be certain.

I find that in the priced vocabulary of stores, 1893, the charge for the Lee-Metford rifle is £4 10 2.

In our contract with the War Office, March, 1896, the price for rifles supplied by the trade was to be £4, plus five and one-half per cent for inspection, and departmental expenses, and for rifles made in the government factories, £3 12 0. The prices for the Lee-Enfield and Lee-Metford are given as the same.

Hence the 10 shillings reduction which I mentioned is probably an understatement; while it is clear that there was certainly a large reduction.

P. LAKE,
Chief of the General Staff.

Headquarters, January 29, 1907."

So that if the low price was due to the fortunate moment at which General Lake arrived in England to purchase this rifle, when the initial price given to the small arms factory had been reduced—for there is always a special allowance made in England in cases of that kind, where any new lot of war material has to be manufactured. That unusual additional price had been taken off so that under the ordinary course of procedure if General Lake had gone there a year before he would have paid 10 shillings more for the rifles, which would make the comparison very much more favorable to the price of the Ross rifle.

Something has been said about American rifles. I have not been able to get the cost of the Springfield rifle, I do not suppose it would be possible to do so. Even if you did it would not be of much value because it is a rifle, made by the government and you would have to add 40 per cent to 50 per cent in order to get the price at which the trade could sell such a rifle. I find that the price of the Winchester rifle is \$32 delivered here, less 10 per cent or \$3.20, so that it is something like \$29 without a bayonet. Thus we have the price of the English rifle as it was in 1896, the price of the English rifle to-day and the price of the Winchester rifle to-day. Of course the Winchester price does not include inspection, they would have to be inspected after delivery here.

I shall now read the clause of the contract governing the price, because it is important:

"8. The government shall pay for the said 12,000 rifles mentioned in the second clause of this contract at the rate of \$25 for each such rifle. The government shall pay out of moneys to be appropriated by parliament for the purpose for all rifles subsequently ordered as herein stipulated the same price of \$25 for each of such rifles, unless one of the parties hereto shall upon the occasion of any demand for further rifles notify the other of such parties that the price of such rifles in similar quantities in the markets of Great Britain has relatively to the present price increased or diminished, in which case the aforesaid price of \$25 shall no longer govern, but the price for the rifles so ordered and to be thereafter ordered shall depend upon a further agreement of the parties, and in default of agreement the price to be fixed as provided in the ninth clause hereof."

I now come to the payment of money before the actual delivery of rifles, payment on account of progress estimates:

"The price for all rifles herein contracted for or to be supplied pursuant to the provisions of this agreement shall be payable upon delivery: provided, however, that after the establishment of the said factory and supplying of the plant for the running of the same the contractor shall be entitled to payment in advance of delivery of moneys actually expended upon the rifles or parts thereof or fixtures therefor to be delivered in that year upon a statement certified by him of the amount so spent upon establishing the fact of such expenditure to the satisfaction, testified by his signature of such statement, of the government inspector of small arms, such payments in no case to exceed 75 per cent of the price of such rifles, the contractor undertaking whenever such advances are made to insure and keep insured the said rifles, parts and fixtures against loss or damage by fire for the benefit of the government to the extent of such advances."

A statement was made to-night with reference to this clause of the contract which was misleading, though of course not intended to do so. It was stated that the present Auditor General had discovered something very loose or undesirable in the way in which this business was being done by the Militia Department, had held up the department and had practically brought about a new system. It is only fair to the department, to the memory of my late friend and deputy, Colonel Pinault, that I should say that if any such impression as that were given it would be entirely unjust, entirely erroneous. I have read the provision by which this advance of 75 per cent was to be made:

"Upon a statement certified by him of the amount so spent upon establishing the fact

of such expenditure to the satisfaction, testified by his signature of such statement, of the government inspector of small arms."

Under this provision there seemed to be a difficulty at once. The then inspector of small arms did not feel disposed to certify upon the statement of Sir Charles Ross or anybody else and said he was not in a position to verify the statements.

Mr. FOSTER. Did he not say it was impossible to do it?

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. I am speaking now of Gaudet. He may have done so. A good deal of correspondence took place, and there were several meetings between my late deputy and Major Gaudet and Sir Charles Ross, with the result that Sir Charles Ross, or perhaps my late deputy, made the suggestion that a chartered accountant, a man of the highest character and standing, should be appointed to verify and certify to these accounts instead of the contractor. This was entirely satisfactory to Sir Charles Ross and it was satisfactory to Major Gaudet, who proceeded after that to certify all accounts so long as he was there. I do not know that there were more than one or two of these accounts. The point I wish to bring to your notice is that the chartered accountant who was selected to do this work and who has done it from the day that factory was started is Colonel Wurtele, and that the so-called change in system is a change between tweedle-dum and tweedle-dee—it is not even that, it is no change, except that to-day the government of Canada is paying Colonel Wurtele and that before the change Sir Charles Ross paid him. The Auditor General said that, technically, under the Audit Act, the conditions of the Audit Act were not met by having that work done by an employee of the contractor. He satisfied himself that Colonel Wurtele was an absolutely reliable man and agreed to the change, which was simply this, that for the future the Department of Militia would pay him, whereas in the past Sir Charles Ross had paid him. My late deputy was something of an economist, he was always making the best bargain he could for the department. I suppose he thought it was under the contract, Sir Charles Ross' privilege and duty to do this, and that he should pay for having it done. This Auditor General takes a different view, but if any hon. gentleman wishes to satisfy himself upon that point, let him turn up books Nos. 1 and 4 of the Report of the Public Accounts Committee of this session, and let him look at Colonel Wurtele's testimony and read all the evidence of the Auditor General, and he will find what I have stated set forth fully. So that all this talk about a change in the system of accounting is moonshine. There is nothing in it. The accounts have been carried on properly from the beginning. We pay the accountant now; Sir Charles

Ross paid him formerly. Colonel Wurtele was recommended by the Bank of Montreal as the best man to do this work, and no man who knows him will dare to insinuate no one has, that it made any difference to Colonel Wurtele whether he was paid by the government or paid by Ross.

Now, we come to another point in this contract, as to the change with reference to the way that prices would be determined in the event of a new rifle—

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. Before leaving this I would like to inquire whether or not it is reasonably practicable to comply with the provisions of that section. How could the government inspector of small arms determine that so much money has been spent upon the rifles which are to be delivered to the government?

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. As a matter of fact the Auditor General relies entirely upon the accountant and the accountant takes stock every time. The departmental accountant, Colonel Wurtele, goes to the Ross rifle factory for the purpose of reporting upon progress estimates. He takes stock of everything there is there and makes a complete report to the Auditor General. The Auditor General is entirely satisfied with that method; so that the inspector has nothing to do with it until he inspects the finished rifle and then he gives his report upon it.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. I suppose the money expended must be represented by a great number of very small parts?

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. Yes.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. How does the inspector, assuming, of course, that he is diligent, faithful and capable—and I am not calling that in question—know whether or not, when he goes to make another similar report, that he is not embracing some of the material that has already been reported upon?

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. The inspector does not report; the accountant reports.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. How can the accountant report upon a thing of that kind?

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. Well, he does it and he satisfies the Auditor General.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. I thought the report would be made by some one familiar with the process of constructing the rifle.

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. Not necessarily, but he has access to everything in the factory, he goes through it thoroughly, he audits the accounts and he is given all the vouchers and bills of every kind and makes his report upon them.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. I suppose it is capable of explanation if one had sufficient time to go into it, but how does the accountant know when he goes through these books

that a part of the material which has been paid for has not gone into the rifles already paid for? How does he know that when he reports on what is in the factory at that time?

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. Well, I heard his evidence before the Public Accounts Committee and I think he satisfied that committee that he was able to do that.

Mr. LENNOX. Is the minister satisfied that it has been done?

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. I am quite satisfied if the Auditor General is satisfied.

Mr. TAYLOR. May I ask the minister how often the employees are paid?

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. I think once a month or once a fortnight,—certainly once a month.

Mr. TAYLOR. If it is once a fortnight it would take a fortnight to take stock. I know what taking stock is.

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. These progress estimates are not paid every fortnight or every month. They are paid perhaps once in three months. It is only when progress estimates are made that this is done. At page 187 of book 4 the Auditor General gives evidence upon this point:

"Mr. John Fraser, Auditor General, called.

By Sir Frederick Borden:

Q. I would like to have you state, Mr. Fraser, whether you consider the present method of guarding the interests of the public treasury in the matter of advances to the Ross Rifle company under the terms of the contract are sufficient, and if you will describe what they are, roughly?—A. In the first place Colonel Wurtele examines the books of the company to ascertain the amount they have expended, the books, vouchers and cheques for payment. At least these are the directions given to Colonel Wurtele, and I presume he carries them out. He examines the books, paylists, and vouchers for the purchase of material, etc., to ascertain the amount that the company is expending on the rifle, and he also is instructed to make an inventory once a month and a variety of statements in connection with it to satisfy us that all this labour and material is expended on the Ross rifle and not on any other rifle that may be manufactured in the establishment. Also, that the amounts included in the certificate do not include anything for—I do not just exactly know what you call it—but for the guns that do not pass inspection—"

The very point that my hon. friend raised, "—the guns that may have to go back—the rejected guns that may require some work done on them. His instructions are not to include money expended on them, but that the expenditure he certifies to should be absolutely the first expenditure, 75 per

cent of the cost of the first process of turning out the guns.

By Mr. Nesbitt:

Q. That is what he does?—A. I presume he does.

Q. You are talking about it from the government standpoint, I would like to go into the box and tell my impression of it—we get the worst of it every time.

By Sir Frederick Borden:

Q. Do you know anything of Colonel Wurtele, his character or qualifications?—A. I never heard anything against him; I believe his qualification is all right, and I am satisfied with Colonel Wurtele's certificates.

Q. You are satisfied with the work he has done?—A. Yes."

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. There is a question by Mr. Hughes.

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN (reading):

By Mr. Hughes:

Q. In regard to the 75 per cent. is it all paid in one sum or is it paid on estimates as the work progresses?—A. It is paid on progress estimates.

By Mr. Northrup:

Q. Have you any check at all, Mr. Fraser, as to whether or not the arms as to which advances are made will be delivered during the year?—A. We cannot tell what will be delivered during the year.

Q. You have no check at all that they will be delivered?—A. That is not necessary at all under the interpretation of the contract.

Q. I am not asking you that, I am asking you whether or not there is any check that they will be delivered during the year?—A. As soon as they expend 75 per cent on account they are entitled to 75 per cent."

I think that is practically all. Then Colonel Wurtele goes into that quite fully, but I think this evidence of the Auditor General ought perhaps to be satisfactory on that point.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. If that is a correct interpretation of the contract, it is different from the progress estimate conditions as they are usually found in a contract. The usual form of progress estimate contract is that 75 per cent. of the amount of work done and material used, or a certain proportion, shall be paid over. But this seems to prove that everything shall be paid over up to 75 per cent; so that, for example, when 50 per cent. of the amount has been expended the contractor gets everything and there is nothing left as security to the government.

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. So far as I know, except the insurance. There is a provision in the contract that the material shall all be kept fully insured. Clause 9 provides that in case of the new rifles being invented the government has the right to

demand that the rifle shall be made at this factory on giving proper notice, and then it states how the price shall be reached. An important paragraph at the end of this clause is the following:

"It being the intention of this agreement that the price of the rifles furnished hereunder shall so far as it is possible be the same as that of similar rifles in like quantities purchased by or for the government, from British manufacturers in the open market in England and delivered in Ottawa.

So that the price of the English rifle is the basis of the price paid, and it is the basis of comparison in the future:

"The contractor shall be permitted to import into Canada tools and machinery not manufactured in Canada up to the required standard necessary for the said factory and also all material or parts in the rough unfinished to be used in rifles to be manufactured by him for the government, free of duty, or in case of payment by the contractor of any duty on any such tools, machinery or material or parts as aforesaid, the contractor shall be entitled to a drawback or remission of duty paid in respect to the finished parts to be used in any such rifles, consisting of screws, nuts, bands and springs."

Now, this is a clause about which a good deal has been said, and I regret to say that a great deal has been said that is absolutely unfair and untrue. It is not an unusual thing, Mr. Speaker, to give to a new industry special consideration of this kind, and particularly, I think, should that be so when it is one which can practically have only one purchaser. The government are practically the only customers who will require the products of this factory, and surely, with all the risk that this contractor was taking, it seems to me not unreasonable that he should be allowed to bring in, what?—machinery that is not made in Canada, material that cannot be procured in Canada, and unfinished parts and parts in the rough that cannot be procured in this country. The changes have been rung from Montreal to Boston—and Sherbrooke—about certain parts that were imported into Canada of this Ross rifle, and the hon. member thought it not beneath his dignity, shall I say—his patriotic dignity, perhaps I had better say—to call this arm a contraband Yankee rifle. That is the kind of thing we have to submit to, and the kind of thing Sir Charles Ross has to submit to. There is nothing in all this to justify any such statement as that. The parts are not imported completed. They are not completed parts. There may be one or two screws and two or three springs imported from the United States or imported from England; but, Mr. Speaker, this factory could not go on without permission to import materials out of which the rifle should be made. It is absolutely untrue to say that this factory is simply a factory for assembling parts.

I would refer again to the evidence given by Colonel Wurtele, and what did Colonel Wurtele say on that point? Colonel Wurtele is the man who makes up the accounts, progress estimates; the man who sees every charge that is made in that factory, who is absolutely acquainted with every voucher and all the books of the company; sees every labourer's account, knows everything about it, so far as the premises are concerned, from beginning to end, and what does he say?

"Q. How many men are employed?—A. From 300 to 500 men. There is something here I notice in the evidence with reference to a sporting rifle made there.

Q. What is the selling value of the sporting rifle?—A. \$35 to \$40.

Q. Have you taken an inventory?—A. I took an inventory in September."

Mr. SAM HUGHES. Were not some affidavits published about these parts in the Montreal and Quebec papers?

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. I think there were, but I never took any stock in the reports in the newspapers.

Mr. SAM HUGHES. There were affidavits by the workmen.

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. I think so. "But the government itself sent down experts to take an inventory of every screw and everything else in the factory."

General Cotton went down there and spent three weeks, and found there was an immense amount of value over and above any claim that the government might have against the Ross rifle on account of advances in the event of their not going on and delivering the rifle.

"Q. Speaking generally, from that information, are you able to say that the balance of the rifles are substantially completed?—A. Well, of course, taking it on the average I should say the contract is complete because they have got a great number of parts finished and complete, over and above the 52,000 contract.

Q. Now can you tell me the amount that has actually been paid out in wages up to date, in actual wages that has gone into the work in the city of Quebec by Sir Charles Ross?—A. Roughly?

Q. Yes?—A. Over \$900,000.

Q. Over \$900,000? Can you tell me how much has been expended in actual material and shop expenses?—A. Over \$300,000 shop expenses and material."

And yet we are told that all the principal parts are brought in from the United States. What have these 500 men been doing there? Can anyone suppose that Sir Charles Ross is so stupid and unbusinesslike that he brings 500 men there to look at the parts which he brings in from the United States?

"Q. Right in the city of Quebec? Of course, some material is purchased outside.

That has nothing to do with the building, plant or anything of that kind?—A. Absolutely nothing.

By Mr. Reid (Grenville):

Q. Does that include the building? A. Nothing.

By Mr. Nesbitt:

Q. Then assuming that the rifles that are there in the inspection department are ready to be taken over when there is room for them, that would practically mean 38,000?—A. 38,000 rifles.

Q. Better than 38,000 rifles. Then that would mean that there has been expended in actual wages in the city of Quebec and on materials and so on, over \$100,000 more than the total advances of the government to-day?—A. About that, yes.

Q. And a lot of that material was purchased in Quebec?—A. Lots of it, yes.

Hon. Mr. Foster.—By wages and material you mean wages employed on, and material used in, the manufacture of rifles.

Mr. Nesbitt.—Yes.

Hon. Mr. Foster.—Simply that?

The Witness.—Yes.

Q. As to these sporting rifles of which there were 150 but you say 200, you have allowed for these?—A. Yes.

By Hon. Mr. Foster:

Q. I want to find out if any portion of that is for purposes outside of this contract, if it is for material and labor to make rifles not to make plant for the manufacture of rifles or to get in water supply?—A. I understand thoroughly; it is for the manufacture of rifles and not capital. It is entirely independent from the capital of the company."

That is what I ventured to assert this afternoon, although my hon. friend was doubtful.

Mr. FOSTER. If my hon. friend will allow me for a moment. This is all a play upon words. The capital spoken of there in one respect was what went into the buildings and machinery; that is, the fixed capital. But after a man has scraped up all he can and put it into his buildings and machinery, he cannot do anything unless he has working capital.

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. Precisely. Nobody denied that the object of this contract was to assist the contractor reasonably. A man who puts half a million of money into buildings and machinery and gets ready to operate and pays for them all before any money was handed over to him by the government, is surely entitled to some consideration. The hon. gentleman this afternoon was endeavoring to lead this House and country to believe that we were supplying all the money the Ross Rifle Company expended.

Mr. FOSTER. He meant working capital.

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. He did not say so.

"Q. It has absolutely nothing to do with what is chargeable to capital account?—A. Nothing.

Q. This suggestion has been made to me among other things: have you been through the factory very recently?—A. Yes, sir.

Q. Have you seen any boys employed on machines?—A. I have not noticed any boys on machines, no, sir.

Q. The tool makers, for instance, are a very highly paid class of mechanics?—A. Yes, Sir, they are more of experts.

Q. Do you know whether or not there was an understanding between the Ross Rifle Company and the government that the balance of the 12,000, assuming that only 9,000 of Mark I were delivered, that the balance of the 12,000 order of Mark I should be made up by the delivery of Mark II?—A. My recollection is that they supplied the deficiency in Mark II.

Q. So that there was no loss to the government in any particular as regards the 3,000 rifles which were not delivered, there was no loss to the government in those parts?—A. No, the company had to make good.

Mr. Northrup:

Q. When you came to look over the pay roll, if you found any Mark I rifles upon which 75 per cent. had been advanced, and those rifles were afterwards turned into Mark II, would there not be double payment on them?—A. I do not see how you could exactly keep that labour separately.

Q. I do not think so either. As a matter of fact, you say you certified 75 per cent of the labor on Mark I, and if those rifles were afterwards used at Mark II, would there not be double labour on those rifles?—A. Of course there would be some labour involved in the change.

Q. Then, when you came to estimate on Mark II, would you not be estimating a second time?—A. No, I could only estimate on 75 per cent. of the total, all over and above that would be a loss to the factory."

Notwithstanding this evidence, a grossly unfair attempt has been made in the press and in this House to make it appear that the Department of Militia and Defence had advanced 75 per cent. on 12,000 rifles, and had only got delivery of 9,000, and that the balance of 3,000 had been thrown somewhere into the dust-heap and the country was out that much—an assertion for which there was not the slightest foundation. So much for the contract. I do not think there are any other portions of it that I need deal with.

With regard to parts imported I would like to say a word. I suppose it will be generally admitted in this House that it would be reasonably good policy to encourage an industry of this kind, an industry which employs 500 men and which means the manufacture of our own rifles in our

own country. I would expect at any rate that hon. gentlemen on the other side of the House would be extremely anxious, in accordance with their professions, to encourage a new industry of this kind. But I am beginning to think that they are going back on themselves; for we find them criticising this factory for doing in a small way what nearly all the great factories in this country are doing in a large way. There is not a factory engaged in the manufacture of similar articles which does not import largely from the United States steel and various other raw materials. Take agricultural implements, the manufacturers are constantly obliged to bring in from the United States articles that go into the manufacture of these implements. Why, my hon. friend from Leeds (Mr. Taylor), who is engaged in the manufacture of carriages, imports largely the material that go into his carriages. He would have to shut up his shops to-morrow if he did not import from the United States.

Mr. TAYLOR. The hon. gentleman is mistaken with reference to carriages. With reference to the wheels—

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. Well, the wheel is part of the carriage. I never knew of a carriage that could run without wheels.

Mr. TAYLOR. The wheel is simply the timber we have not in the country.

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. Perhaps the hon. gentleman does not know as much about the way his carriages are manufactured as he thinks he does. I have here from a carriage manufacturer a statement of the things brought in from the United States:

Materials.	Per cent Imported.		Reason.
	United States.	England.	
Lumber, all kinds	50		
Mahogany, cherry, W. oak, cotton-wood, gum, yellow pine.	100		
Veneer.	100		Not made in Canada
<i>Upholstering</i>			
Rattan.	100		" "
Carpet.	50		Quality not good enough, made here
Steel for springs and crucible steel	100		Not made in Canada
Pantasote.	100		" "
Duplex duok	100		" "
Curtain fixtures	100		" "
Curtain rollers.	100		Not made in Canada
Moss.	100		" "
Grommets.	100		" "
Curled hair.	50		" "
Plush.		50	" "
<i>Carriage and Wagon Hardware</i>		40	
Axles.			Special axle not made in Canada.
Springs.	25		" "
Carvings, hearse.	100		" "
Carriage lamps.	100		" "
Malleable hardware, including whiffletree irons, neck yoke irons, spring shackles, wrenches, hold-backs, &c.		80	" "
Hinges, landau, &c.		40	" "
Landau, top props and nuts	100		" "
Landau toilet sets	100		" "
Landau top fasteners.	100		" "
Landau speaking tubes	100		" "
Curtain fasteners.	100		" "
Steel skeins.	100		" "
Tire steel.		10	Special rd. edge not made in Canada.
Whip sockets.		20	Special not made in Canada.
<i>Car Fittings and Parts.</i>			
Glass.	100		
Headlights.	100		Not made in Canada
Trucks.	100		Variety called for not made in Canada.
Brass tubing.		20	80 Not made in Canada
Brass rods.			
Brass catches, come and go.	100		" "
Stanwood steps.	100		" "
Gongs, foot.	100		" "
Heaters, car, electric	100		" "
Heaters, car, water	100		" "
Door checks.	100		" "
Couplers, car.			" "
Car fenders.	100		" "
Braided copper wire.			" "
Electric Fixtures.			" "
Benjamin.		15	" "

Materials	Per cent. Imported		Reason.
	United States	England	
<i>Paints and Varnishes</i>			
Varnishes.....		60	Not made in Canada
Lacquer for metal goods.....	100		" "
Carminette.....	100		" "
Sponges.....			" "
Chamois.....			" "
Pumice Stone.....			" "
Ribbon gold.....	100		" "
Gilders' gold.....		100	" "
MISCELLANEOUS.			
<i>Iron and Steel</i>			
Angles, beams, channels, hoop, bullet-proof.....	50		
Machinery.....	50		Specials not made in Canada.
Tripoli and brass polishers supplies	75		Not made in Canada
Tarred rope.....	100		Quality not made in Canada.
Chain.....		30	Special, not made in Canada.
Bolts, sec. hd.....		5	" "
Tools, drills, &c.....	50		" "
Hard and smithing coal.....	100		" "
Sand and flint paper.....	100		" "
Emery cloth.....	100		" "
Wicker baskets.....	100		" "
Wicker wheel guards, umbrella baskets.....	100		" "
Rubber cord step pads.....	100		" "
Arc lamps.....	100		" "
Band saws.....	50		Special, not made in Canada.
Phosphor bronze sheet.....	100		" "
Time clocks and watchman's.....			" "
Roller bearing wheels and axles.....			" "
Cloth for carriage work.....	50		" "
Lace for carriage work.....	100		" "
Steel tubing, weldless.....		100	" "

"When special screws, spring or special fixtures are required, it becomes necessary to import or make them ourselves."

Mr. TAYLOR. The hon. gentleman has enumerated a great many articles that do not go into the construction of a carriage.

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. Of carriages and cars.

Mr. TAYLOR. The hon. gentleman mentioned tire steel. We purchase it all in Nova Scotia, and do not get a bar outside this country. Nearly everything except the wood is made in Canada.

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. Since how long?

Mr. TAYLOR. For years. I have been manufacturing twenty years and we purchase nearly all our supplies in Canada.

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. We have factories making motors in Canada. There is one which boasts that it makes an all Canadian motor. Well, of the various materials which go into that 50-H.P. motor, \$1,900 worth are imported out of the \$4,500. And for an 18-H.P. motor, \$136 of materials out of the \$1,600 price, come from the United States. I do not object to this, but I do object to applying to the Ross rifle a rule which hon. gentlemen are not prepared to apply to other manufactures in Canada. The time will come no doubt when all these things will be manufactured in Canada, the time will come when the steel will be manufactured here, and Sir Charles Ross has told me that the moment he can get the suitable steel in Canada for the manufacture of the parts of his rifle, he will buy it here. I am told that at Peterborough there are three or four most important industries which would have to close their doors to-morrow if they were not allowed to purchase from the United States, not raw materials, but finished products. Take door bells, the springs are imported ready to put on the bell. Take an auger or bit, the point is imported from the United States; it cannot be made in Canada. Take the manufacture of shovels, the wood and I think the steel must be imported. Surely we are not going to go back on our policy, surely the importance of having the labour done in Canada is something, when we find that out of \$1,200,000 expended in the factory \$900,000 were spent on labour alone. That one statement should put an end forever to these vain imaginings—for they are nothing more—begotten from a deceased mind—

Mr. FOSTER. Order; go it easy.

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. I would like to have said a base desire to injure a Canadian industry—I shall not say anything about the government and myself.

Mr. FOSTER. The government is beyond injury now.

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. Perhaps the hon. gentleman will find that out to his cost.

Mr. TALBOT. He is thinking of the old government.

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. Yes, the good old days. We have heard a good deal to-day about defects of rifles. We hear of the defects of the Ross rifle. Now, I am not here to make damaging or injurious statements about any other rifle. I am here to give the facts. And I am here to show this House that there are at least other rifles beside the Ross rifle to which ac-

idents may happen. The Lee-Enfield rifle is, in my opinion a good one. I would have been quite content to have had it manufactured in Canada. I gave the manufacturers in England the first chance and tried on more than one occasion to prevail upon them to come here. They would not do so. I have here a report of some damaged Lee-Enfield rifles:

REPORT ON DAMAGED LEE-ENFIELD RIFLES.

Place	Year	Corps	Nature of Damage
Toronto	1905	C. M. R.	Barrel burst.
"	1905	9th T. L. H.	"
"	1905	10th Regt.	Barrel bulged.
"	1906	"	"
"	1906	Fenwick, R.A.	Breech burst.
"	1906	21st Regt	Barrel bulged.
"	1906	9th T. L. H.	"
Ottawa	1897	G. G. F. G.	Bolt blown out.
"	1899	"	Barrel burst.
"	1903	74th Regt	"
"	1904	Renfrew R. A.	"
"	1905	3 Coy F. G.	"
"	1906	G. G. F. G.	"
"	1907	"	"
Winnipeg	1903	LaRiviere R.A.	Muzzle of rifle expanded.
"	1903	Fort Saskatchewan R.A.	Broken bolt.
"	1905	Springfield R. A.	" " Barrel twisted.
"	1905	Prince Albert, R.A.	Barrel burst.
"	1905	Saskatchewan, R.A.	Bolt broken. Barrel bulged.
"	1906	C. M. R.	Barrel burst.
"	1906	La Riviere R. A.	Bolt broken. Kink in barrel.
"	1906	Franklin, R. A.	"
"	1906	15th L. H.	Cocking piece broken.
"	1906	C. M. R.	Bolt Broken.
"	1907	Nose Creek, R.A.	Butt plate broken.
"	1907	Cannington Manor, R. A.	Two bolts broken. Bulged barrel.
"	1908	Snow Flake, R.A.	Barrel loose.
Quebec	1908	S. O. O Reports	About twenty repaired annually lost swivels, loose butts, bolt blown out, bolt heads blown off cases of burst barrels.
Kingston	1908	General Report	One or two barrels bulged. New striker required in one case.
St. John, N.B.	1901	8th Hussars.	Breech damaged.
"	1903	Moncton R. A.	Barrel, body and chamber burst.
"	1903	73rd Regt.	Breech damaged.
"	1903	C. C. R. Ass'n	Stock broken off.
Halifax		S. O. O. reports	Two barrels damaged. One bolt blown out.
Montreal		S. O. O. reports	19 repairs, owing to defective cocking pieces, sears and springs; 150 repaired, loose butts and covers; 25 repaired, hand guards broken, barrels unserviceable bolts broken.
Calgary	1906	15th L. H.	Bolt broken.
Esquimalt	1906	5th Regt. C. A.	Bullet jammed.
		S. O. O. reports	Repairs owing to defective material, hand guards, 2; springs, 10; catches magazine 5; strikers, 1; bolts breech studs, 6; sears, 5; extractors, 2; stocks forend, 1; swivels, 5; breech bolt blown away 2.

S. O. O. also reports 4 bolts blown back. In some cases 'bands' were found to be 'loose.' Stock butts, some found loose. Piling swivel screws some lost owing to short screws. Eye of magazine, about 1 per cent pull out owing to defective brazing.

Mr. SAM HUGHES. Were there any big headlines in the newspapers about these?

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. Not yet; there may be to-morrow. Now, what a terrible thing for my hon. friend (Mr. Foster) to have armed the volunteers with such a rifle as that. I am not going to trouble the House by following the long weary reading which the hon. member (Mr. Worthington) made of certain reports which he wanted to place on 'Hansard,' but I have here a statement giving the whole thing boiled down. What it took the hon. gentleman two hours of our valuable time to read is here. It shows the number of damaged rifles, ranged under the headings 'Serviceable, Repairable' and 'Unserviceable.' And in this whole list there is not one rifle that is not put down as 'serviceable.' Of all the list that the hon. gentleman read, every one is mentioned here by my officials who take the responsibility for this, as being 'serviceable' and 'repairable' and not one 'unserviceable.' It happens—and a great deal was made of that—that there is a return of a large number damaged at Halifax, no fewer than 257. There are also 36 in Militia District No. 8 and 38 at Quebec. These are the only large numbers except at Halifax. The rifles were issued to all the districts throughout Canada and subjected to the same tests. I cannot account for it. I shall make further investigation. Whether it is due to the fact that there are in Halifax a lot of old English soldiers who had been accustomed to using the Lee-Enfield and who were not properly trained in the use of the Ross rifle, or whether there were officers who were prejudiced against the Ross rifle and in favor of the other, I am not prepared to say. But I intend to find out. I shall make it my business to find out. It is certainly a remarkable thing that nearly all these complaints come from Halifax. And yet there is not one unserviceable rifle, not one rifle that could not be repaired and put in proper shape by any armourer. Here is what appears in the end of the statement:

"On receipt of these reports the inspector of small arms sends for such rifles or parts of rifles as cannot be repaired locally, or else forwards such spare parts as are necessary to enable the repairs to be made locally.

The general nature of the damage to these rifles is such that all are easily repairable."

In that connection I wish to repeat what I said in the earlier part of my remarks. And I will read this so that there may be no doubt about as to Mark I.

"Although the details are not complete, there is every reason to believe that the complaints made against the Mark I rifle can be met and the arm put to very good use. For this purpose they have been recal-

led into stores and replaced by a later issue of March 11, and when the proper time arrives the necessary changes can be made keeping the Mark I rifle as it is at present, and only remedying the complaint incorrectly described as blow back of the bolt. The very trifling expense of putting in a cross pin will do all that is required."

As Mark II.

"The majority of complaints have been made about the earlier issues of Mark II."

That is the Halifax issue.

"And can be overcome in many cases if not all—"

These are the words of the inspector endorsed by the Master General of Ordnance, and I am sure every one of them can be made right.

"—merely by the issue of spare parts to be fitted by a competent local armourer."

And this is the sum in toto of the indictment made by the hon. gentleman this afternoon.

Mr. Speaker, I insisted upon the Ross rifle being sent out to the troops all over the country, and in this respect the Ross rifle has been treated unfairly and differently from the Lee-Enfield. The Lee-Enfield was brought here about the time I assumed my present position and I wondered then what it was intended to do with it. When I asked: Where is the Lee-Enfield, rifle I was told: Oh, it was packed away carefully—apparently in cotton wool, you could not get it out, they would not issue it and it was years and years before that rifle was issued except in camps of instruction to allow the militiamen to see it and fire a few shots. That is the way the Lee-Enfield was treated. But the Ross was unfairly treated, and I am responsible to some extent because owing to the unjust criticism that was being made and the prejudice that was being created all over the country in order to injure the rifle, I thought it desirable that it should be issued, and it was issued before it should have been. I wish to say now and at once that at the camps this year I intend that the Ross rifle and the Lee-Enfield alone shall do all the target practice. The Lee-Enfield will not be used in this year's camps and we will have a still better test than we have had of the qualities of the Ross rifle. We are not afraid to use the Ross rifle. The Ross rifle is not dangerous, and the statement that it is dangerous is a diabolical invention intended to injure the rifle, intended to injure the factory, intended to alarm the militia of Canada. A more outrageous campaign was never undertaken in Canada and such a campaign was never thought of in either England or the United States. You could not find a man in England or the United States who would abuse his position in the army of either of those countries and in the parliament of either

country to try to strike a blow at the service rifle which has been deliberately adopted by that country. We know what troubles they have had in those countries. It is not a question of Mark I, Mark II and Mark III in the case of the Lee-Metford rifle in England, it is a question of Mark XII, and the story goes to-day that the latest rifle is by no means satisfactory. Those who have followed events in the United States know that the same thing has happened there and yet you will search in vain the records of congress and the records of the British parliament to find anything to compare with the treatment which has been meted out to this government and to this rifle.

A great deal was said to-day about blow-outs or blow-offs. The hon. member said that this rifle was dangerous. He read for two hours from reports, but failed to find anything more than a screw loose in a back sight, or a front sight, or some other sight and some little insignificant or trifling matters. He had to go back to the two or three cases upon which he rang the changes last year. He brought up a case at Lethbridge, another at St. John, N.B., and another at Eastman, the latter more or less made to order. I propose to say a few words about these three cases. Sergeant-Major Brownbridge, of the Northwest Mounted Police, gave evidence before the Public Accounts Committee last year. I have the evidence here, but I do not wish to detain the House. After giving evidence for two or three days he came down off his high horse and admitted in almost as many words that it was not a blow-back, but some little nut at the end of the bolt had become loose and the spring had been forced back. That is what it came to.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. There was some report by an official connected with the Northwest Mounted Police. Is that the same man?

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. Yes, he gave evidence here. I would like to say a few words about the St. John, N.B., case. The hon. gentleman read some letters this afternoon from Major Armstrong. It seems that there was a rifle practice on the 24th of May by the 3rd Canadian Artillery and an alleged accident happened. Nothing more was heard of it, no report was made until some time in December, when from headquarters the question was asked why this particular corps had not done its annual shooting. Then some excuse had to be put forward, they had forgotten all about the accident that happened on the 24th of May. No board was held, no report was made, but at the end of December, when it was necessary to account for their not having done their annual shooting the report came in of this terrible accident which nearly took somebody's life.

Mr. CARVELL. It came by telephone?

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. Yes. Parliament was not sitting in May, or perhaps it was; at any rate it was sitting in December and the Ross rifle campaign had been begun. I am not going to delay the House, but I am going to read Major Pym's report of this accident. Major Pym was at once sent to St. John to look into the case, the rifles were secured and brought to Ottawa to see whether there had been one part of the rifle blown into three pieces or what had really happened:

"Headquarters, March 12, 1907.
The M. G. O.

'The Inspector, Small Arms,
Inspection of Ross Rifles, St. John, N.B.

With reference to your minute of the 4th instant, I beg to report that I proceeded to St. John, 6th instant, to investigate the circumstances under which two Ross rifles, Mark I, were damaged on May 24, 1906.

1. The case containing the two rifles in question was opened by me at the District Office. These rifles have been identified by the Officer Commanding No. 2 Company, 3rd Regiment, C.A., as those reported on by him.

2. I obtained from this officer a statement as to what occurred on May 24, 1906, when one of these rifles was reported to have exploded and the other considered unsafe to fire.

The information he gave me when compared with the official report previous to submission (Section 514., 15, 19) seems to show some confusion of ideas as to what actually happened; but taking his latest statements in connection with those of other members of the regiment, together with a further examination of the rifle, I arrived at the following conclusions:—

- (a) There is no evidence to show that any part of the rifle flew into three pieces.
- (b) No broken part has been found.
- (c) No substitution of parts has been made.
- (d) The rifle bears no evidence of a premature explosion.

No official report appears to have been made to the D.O.C., M.D. No. 8, of the occurrence until January 19, 1907, when it was given for the reason for not having completed the musketry course.

A broken cover screw was the only defect in the other rifle referred to.

(Sgd.) J. BEVILLE PYM, Major,
D.M. Inspector Small Arms.

For the Ministers' information.

(Sgd.) W. H. COTTON, Col., M.G.O.
12-3-07."

This is the terrible case of the blow back referred to. I think, we might call it a boomerang.

Mr. TALBOT. Or a roorback.

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. Or a roorback. There is a more interesting and a more recent case—the Eastman case. That is an eastern townships case, and I propose to refer to that as briefly as I can. Something happened at a competition in the Eastern Townships. My hon. friend mentioned it to-day. He said it was a very narrow escape. There was a board held in connection with this alleged accident and at that board Major Pym was present. I think I will have his report a little later, but there are one or two questions and answers that I would like to read here:

“By Mr. Barnes:

Q. Were you present at every practice when this rifle was used?—A. I may have missed two or three practices.

Q. Has the rifle been in your possession ever since the 2nd of October instant?—A. It has—but on the 3rd of October, I think, any way shortly after the accident, I am sure now it was the day after, I was telephoned to by Sidney Longhurst at Mansonville asking me to send the rifle and parts there. There was a Conservative caucus there that night and my idea is he wanted it for that.”

That is the way they are running the Ross rifle into politics. This is the sort of thing that my hon. friends are encouraging.

“Q. Has this rifle always been in your possession?—A. No. Sometimes when I have been away other members of the rifle association have come to my house for it. I never took it to pieces and only put it together thus once when it came apart.”

There are a number of questions and answers which I will not detain the House by reading but I have another little bit of evidence on this point which I would like to read. It will be found at page 142 book No. 4. Major Pym is giving evidence:

“By Mr. Worthington:

Q. You have heard, no doubt, of the number of accidents that have been happening from the use of the Ross rifle throughout the country?—A. I have.

Q. Have the rifles injured been submitted to you for your opinion?—A. Some of them have.

Q. As a rule what was the cause of the accident, what was the cause in most of these cases?—A. I think it depends upon what the nature of the accident was. If you could state that, perhaps I could remember the details.

Q. Did you see a rifle sent from Eastman, Quebec?—A. Yes.

Q. I believe it was previously investigated by a court of inquiry?—A. I was present at the court of inquiry.

Q. I think there was one court of inquiry held at Eastman?—A. I was at Eastman too.

Q. What was the verdict of the court of inquiry?—A. So far as I recollect the verdict of the court of inquiry was that there was reason to believe that the rifle, or some part of the rifle, had been improperly used and therefore, that the bolt might have closed; that is to say that the rifle might have been fired in closing the bolt, but there was no evidence to show what caused an explosion, which is a very different thing

Sir Frederick Borden:

Q. The rifle might probably have been tampered with?—A. Well, tampered with inasmuch as the rifleman will always tamper with their cocking-pieces, or with the sear, to get what they call ‘a sweet pull off.’

Q. Was there not absolute evidence that a certain part of the rifle had been filed?—A. Yes, it had that appearance. It bore that appearance.”

I think we may fairly assume that we have disposed of the only three serious cases that have been put forward out of all the thousands of rifles which have been distributed throughout the country and which have been in use for the last two or three years.

There were a good many other matters that I had notes of but I am not going to detain the House. I will only stop to say now that a committee known as the Small Arms Committee has been permanently established in connection with the Department of Militia and Defence. There is such a board or committee, I believe in every country in the world. In England it performs an important function, that function being of an advisory character to the War Office. In the United States I believe there is a similar board. I thought the only safe way to deal with matters of this kind would be to establish by order in council a similar board and that has been done. Most of the gentlemen composing that board are well known throughout Canada although they were contemptuously referred to this afternoon, as a whitewashing board, by the hon. member who entertained us so long. The proper title of this board is the Standing Committee on Small Arms, authorized by general order 36, 1908.

“President—

Brevet Colonel Sam. Hughes, M.P.
Members—

Lieutenant Colonel W. P. Anderson, R.O.
Lieutenant Colonel J. H. Burland, R.O.
Lieutenant Colonel C. Greville Harston, R.O.
Major R. A. Helmer, D.A.A.G.M.
A. O. Fages, R.C.R.
J. B. Pym, I.S.A., M.G.
W. H. Davidson, 8th Regiment.
J. E. Hutcheson, 43rd Regiment.

Associate members—

Lieutenant Colonel F. M. Gaudet, R.C.A.

Superintendent Dominion Ordnance.

J. W. Harkom, R.O.
A. E. McIntyre, Esq., Ph.D.
A. H. Walters, Esq., M.A."

These last four are employed for their special scientific and general knowledge Colonel Greville Harston is an ex-imperial officer, and was at one time employed by the British government in doing some work in connection with converting one type of small arms to another. I believe these men are able, conscientious and determined to do their duty. Some of them are now at Quebec testing carefully an improved. I suppose it might be called, or a modified Ross rifle. As the result of what has happened; as a result of the reports which have been made, and information which has been gained, the contractor, with the assistance of members of the Militia Department, has thought it desirable to make certain changes, and before the manufacture of the new order for 10,000 rifles is begun this modified form of rifle will be thoroughly tested. Already many valuable tests have been made, but I shall not go into that; I am not an expert, and I know my hon. friend (Col. Hughes) will take that up when he has an opportunity of speaking. Suffice it to say that every effort has been made, and has been done from the first, to secure the manufacture of the very best rifle. I have been told by some men who were supposed to be somewhat critical of the rifle as first issued that they believe it is a remarkably good rifle. Certainly the shooting that has been done all over the country with the new rifle sent out by Sir Charles Ross himself (none have been issued by the department yet) has been remarkable. Most extraordinary shooting was made here a few days ago by the Ottawa member of the committee. I overlooked one thing which I would like to say before I conclude. The hon. member, in his speech to-day, referred to two friends of his, I suppose who had been saying nasty things about the Ross rifle. He gave the name of one as Luther R. Henry Burns, a former employee of the rifle factory, and the other he gave as J. H. Stanton, of St. Catharines, also an ex-employee. I know nothing about the former man, Mr. Burns, although I would think it somewhat undesirable for a member occupying such a prominent place as the hon. member does as an officer of the militia and as a member of this parliament, to read letters from a disappointed or dismissed employee.

Mr. SAM HUGHES. Without any date.

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. Mr. Stanton—I do not want to do him any harm—wrote letters to me, and they were sent to the Ross rifle company and were answered. I do not know whether the answers were published or not, but they are on the file of

the return I brought down. He also wrote to the Prime Minister, and I find this letter in the return I brought down last session, and part of which has been printed in No. 5 of the reports of the Public Accounts Committee. But this letter seems to have escaped somebody's eagle eye, and so I shall read it. Mr. Boudreau, then the Prime Minister's secretary, had evidently written a letter to my late deputy, Colonel Pinault, who had sent him Stanton's letter, and this is Colonel Pinault's reply:

"Ottawa, February 2, 1906."

Dear Mr. Boudreau,—With reference to the attached letter from Mr. J. H. Stanton, of St. Catharines, I would suggest that the premier should give very little of his time to this man. He has written several letters to this department, and for some reason perhaps known to himself, he refuses to accept as true what I have told him as regards the Ross rifle factory being a private concern. He has been told that we have nothing to do with the management of the company, and that all that we are concerned about is obtaining arms up to the standard for which the company have entered into a contract with the government, as to which our inspector is the judge.

Stanton was an employee of the company, and as is not infrequent when a man has been dismissed, he is disgruntled. He is known to have offered a bribe to have an invention of his own helped on, from which fact alone, he is hardly a man to be taken seriously when he preaches honesty.

The grounds I have taken in answering his letters are that such questions as the foreman's keeping the laborers waiting until he sees fit to give them work are for the company and not this department to deal with; that what we are concerned about is that the rifles they turn out are according to pattern.

Very truly yours,
(Sgd.) L. F. PINAULT.

Rodolphe Boudreau, Esq.,

Private Secretary to the Premier, Ottawa, Ontario.

In conclusion, I observe that the motion before you refers to 'the dealings of the Department of Militia and Defence in connection with the adoption and manufacture of the Ross rifle' and so on. Well, I have pointed out so far as I could the dealings. I do not quite know what the mover of the motion means by using that phrase. There were no dealings as to the adoption or as to the manufacture of the Ross rifle which were not absolutely straightforward and above board. I have given the reasons for encouraging the establishment of this factory in Canada. I have given the reason first of high policy, of imperial policy, and of policy which would properly safeguard

the integrity of our own domain. I have stated that I did my best to persuade somebody in England—the Chamberlains, whom I saw more than once—to establish a branch of their great factory in Canada, but I failed. I am free to admit, and I will never deny the fact—there is no reason why I should—that I would have preferred the establishment here of the same service rifle as the imperial army is armed with. Not that it is a better rifle. I do not think it is as good a rifle. But I am not called on to make comparisons of that kind. As a matter of convenience I would have preferred it, and I did my best to bring it about; but I did not succeed. I did what I thought was the next best thing, and I have been instrumental in encouraging the establishment in Canada of a great industry, and I wish to say that I am more proud of that act and that fact than anything else in my twelve years of administration. I am willing to stand or fall by what has been done. I do

not pretend to say that no mistakes have been made. It would be utterly impossible that the introduction of a new industry like this could go on smoothly without some friction and some difficulty. It has never happened anywhere in the world, and it is not likely to happen here, because we have had less experience than other countries. But I repeat what I said, that the country has got value for its money, and that there are no rifles issued or to be issued or to be received by the inspector which are not good value and which could not be made serviceable in a very short space of time; and there are not many of them which are not at this moment serviceable. Now, Mr. Speaker, I must leave myself in the hands of this House. The House must judge as to my motive and my administration. If it will treat me fairly and consider fairly all the facts, I have no doubt what the result of this vote will be.

Results Achieved in Canadian Camps.

In all the Camps of Instruction, with the exception of Goderich, the Ross rifle has been used for Target Practice this year and, as might have been expected owing to attacks in Parliament and certain Newspapers, the rifles were subjected to the closest possible inspection and criticism. In all over two thousand rifles have been issued and each fired by from 5 to 10 different men many of whom never handled a rifle before. The rifles were thus subjected to the most severe possible test; that of being manipulated by untrained men. The results have been most satisfactory. No accidents of any kind have occurred and the Musketry Practice of 1908 show better results than any heretofore, in the Camps of Instruction. Statistics of the camps are not yet in hand so that a detailed statement of results cannot be given, but taking Niagara, the largest training camp in Canada, as an example where some 5,000 men are trained, here, as in other camps, the firing was done with the Ross Rifle and only 20 men out of this large number, failed to qualify while in

1907 when the firing was done with the Lee-Enfield Rifle, some 400 men failed and thus lost their efficiency pay. In Three Rivers, Levis, Sussex and Charlottetown Camps, there is less than 1 per cent of failure, whereas the regulations have been more rigidly enforced than ever before.

Rifles and ammunition are undergoing constant changes and improvement and the Ross rifle, has, like the rifles of other countries, been modified in accordance with experience.

The Minister of Militia, in spite of ignorant criticisms by so called experts, has adopted the principle of manufacturing a rifle in Canada, and authorized changes as required. The results speak for themselves in the splendid showing made by the Ross Rifle in the hands of the Militia, who, after all, are the men to whom we look to for defence in time of trouble, certainly more than to politicians whose only interest in the rifle is to make capital for election purposes.

The Ross Rifle Triumphs at Bisley.

In discussing the achievements of the Ross Rifle at Bisley the London Times often uses the expression "Phenomenal Success" The Quebec Chronicle (Conservative) says: "The performance of the Ross rifle at Bisley well justifies the language of the English publication, "The Times," which, discussing the matter of rifles and ammunition, uses the expression, "phenomenal suc-

cess" in referring to Sir Charles Ross. At the time of writing the "Gold Jewel of the English Eight," which is the national blue ribbon of match shooting, the "Egge," 1,000 and 1,100 yds., the "Halford Memorial," 900 and 1,000 yds., have been won with Ross rifles. In addition to this second place was secured in the "Waldegrave," 800 yds., with a score of 49 out of 50.

