

# SPEECH

*With Compliments of*

*A. N. Worthington, M. P.*

-OF-

MR. A. N. WORTHINGTON, M.P.

THE DOMINION LIBERAL-CONSERVATIVE ASSOCIATION  
FOR ONTARIO,

-ON-

*J. S. CARSTAIRS, Secretary.*

410 CROWN LIFE BUILDING,  
TORONTO.

## THE ROSS RIFLE

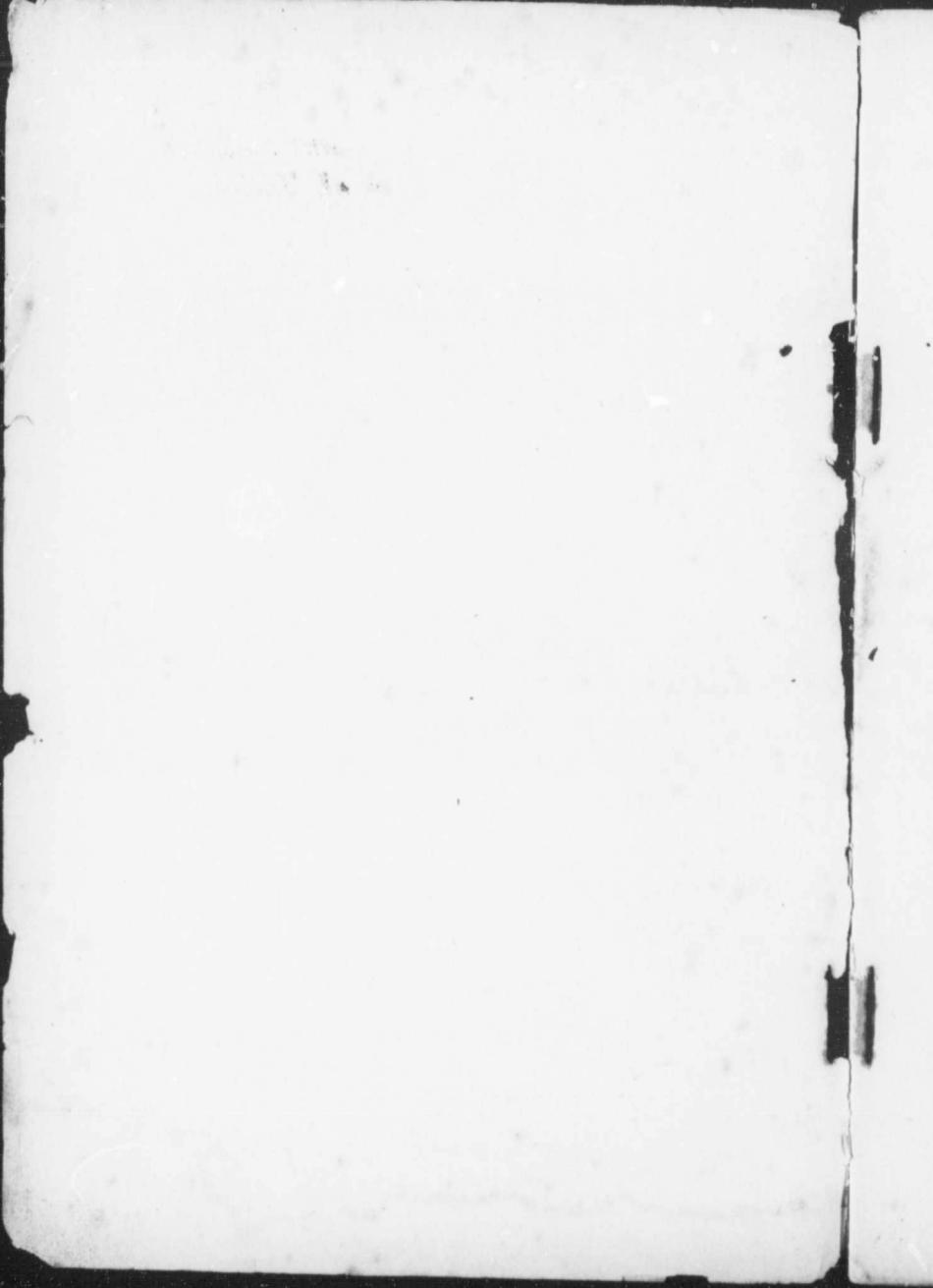
Ottawa, Thursday, May 21st, 1908.

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### MOTION.

That all the words after the word 'that' in the proposed motion be left out, and the following substituted instead thereof:

"The dealings of the Department of Militia and Defence in connection with the adoption and manufacture of the Ross Rifle as an arm for the defence of Canada have displayed deplorable inefficiency, have been characterized by gross extravagance and improvidence, and have impaired public confidence both in the alleged efficiency of the rifle and in the management of the department."



SUPPLY--THE ROSS RIFLE.

Mr. FIELDING moved that the House go into Committee of Supply.

Mr. A. N. WORTHINGTON (Sherbrooke). Mr. Speaker, I propose for a short time this afternoon to discuss the Ross rifle and to conclude my remarks with a motion. In again bringing the subject of the Ross rifle before the House I would refer to my remarks of last session, in which I stated that it was not my intention to endeavor in any way to embarrass the Department of Militia and Defence, to injure the manufacturer, or to impede the manufacture of the rifle in Canada. My sole object was to have placed in the hands of the militia of Canada a safe, serviceable and efficient rifle. With this object in view I urged the Minister of Militia to submit the rifle to such an inspection at the hands of musketry experts of note as would result in one of two things -- in allaying the fear which existed in the minds of an already gun-shy militia, or in the rifle being perfected; or a better rifle being placed in the hands of the militia of Canada. This the minister refused to do in spite of the criticism in the House and in the press, in spite of the absolute condemnation of the rifle by the Royal Northwest Mounted Police, in spite of its more or less general failure in the hands of the permanent force and the militia, in spite of the refusal of men to use it, and in spite of the severe accidents which have happened at St. John, at Eastman and at Lethbridge; so that to-day, Mr. Speaker, I have no apology to offer for a strenuous criticism of the weakness of the right hon. gentleman who leads this House and his War Minister in placing in the hands of the militia of Canada an unsafe and unserviceable rifle--an action, Mr. Speaker, which, in the mind of any one who has read the reports, is nothing short of criminal.

To begin with, I would refer to the *raison d'etre* for the rifle. This was a very commendable desire on the part of the Minister of Militia and the Militia Council to have a rifle manufactured in Canada--to have a factory established within our own borders capable of turning out a sufficient number of arms so that in the event of our being cut off from the mother country in time of trouble we would still have

our own source of supply in Canada. This was a very commendable idea, but we shall soon see, Mr. Speaker, how the idea turned out, and how a contraband Yankee rifle came to be placed in the hands of the militia of Canada. The Minister of Militia started in search of a rifle and somebody to manufacture the same. The manufacturer was soon forthcoming in the person of Sir Charles Ross, and the rifle adopted was the Ross straight-pull magazine rifle. A company was formed and incorporated. As to the personnel of the company it matters little, as we were told by the minister in this House that the original company never went into existence but that Sir Charles Ross is doing business individually under his own name. The company was given a free site on the Plains of Abraham. It might be well to inquire why the Ross rifle was adopted? How it came to find favor in the eyes of the Minister of Militia and the Government? It is very hard to say why the British pattern rifle was not adopted, but we were told in the Public Accounts Committee by the solicitor of the Ross Rifle Company, that the Ross rifle was an exact reproduction of the Manlicher rifle with which some 250,000 men of the Australian army are armed.

We were also told that a commission had sat upon and adopted this rifle as being one of the best and most up to date. But in the event of the rifle having been adopted on the strength of its being the same as that used in the Austrian army, that army has not been re-armed since 1896, so that we are not getting a very new or up to date weapon. As no very favorable opinions have been given up to this time, it would be only reasonable to ask if the rifle has been reported on by the war office or any particular commission up to that time. We have been told by the Minister of Militia that the War Office has never reported upon or criticized the rifle for the simple reason that it had never been submitted to the war office, a fairly comprehensive alibi. But the statement is one I would be inclined to take with a grain of salt, considering the fact that the hon. minister has told us that none of the component parts of this rifle were

manufactured in the United States. For that reason I would be inclined to doubt that statement, but in any event about the time the rifle was adopted, or shortly afterwards, Lord Middleton, then secretary for war, in a despatch to Lord Minto, then Governor-General, regretted that "while the Ross rifle would take the same ammunition as the Lee-Enfield, the different parts of the two rifles were not interchangeable, which would be a great drawback."

Mr. SAM HUGHES. Whose report is that?

Mr. WORTHINGTON. Lord Middleton, then Mr. Broderick, secretary for war.

Mr. SAM HUGHES. Is the hon. gentleman aware that no two parts of the Lee-Enfield are interchangeable, and there are eighteen different sections?

Mr. WORTHINGTON. The hon. gentleman will have ample opportunity to speak his little piece when I am through. This despatch also says that two Ross rifles had been tested by the officers of the Musketry School at Hythe in connection with two Lee-Enfield rifles, and the test showed the marked inferiority of the Ross rifle. This of course, has been denied by the Minister of Militia. There is, therefore, good reason to suppose that the Ross rifle must have been adopted for some other good and sufficient cause.

We are told that the Ross rifle was tested at Springfield and New Haven, and other places, and passed very creditable examinations. The earliest date of the test of which we have cognizance is to be found in the report No. 5 of the Public Accounts Committee on the Ross rifle. I take the following from the report of the hon. member for Victoria and Haliburton (Mr. Sam Hughes), page 197, after stating that he had visited the United States' arsenal and factories at Springfield, Massachusetts, and the Pratt & Whitney and other works in Hartford, Connecticut, and expressing his appreciation of the courtesy extended to him, he reported as follows to General Otter:

"It may be noted that on active service in South Africa I chanced to take several straight pull actioned rifles from the Boers. Though the action was weak, the resistance lug or

block being at the rear of the bolt, yet the ease in loading and firing, the steadiness of the rifle, its magazine, its steadiness impressed me. It was of the Mannlicher type straight pull. The Sir Charles Ross rifle has all the advantages of the other with none of its drawbacks. The Sir Charles Ross rifle locks its resistance lugs at the forward end of the bolt; is the strongest rifle I have seen; is least likely to get out of order, and is the simplest to dismount and put together."

He also speaks about the tests of the Ross rifle made at Hartford in comparison with the Lee-Enfield. He says:

"The first defective in the Lee-Enfield blew off and smashed the magazine."

That is the defective cartridge which is used in testing the Lee-Enfield.

"The second Lee-Enfield was disabled by the next defective, the extractor spring being broken. Thus far nothing had happened the Sir Charles Ross action. It may be noted the first defective from each was fired with the rifles firing screwed in a vice at the muzzle, both rifles slightly opened the action from the recoil."

I quote this report because it differs very materially from the report I have here, which comes from the Springfield armoury, dated 31st of August, 1903, and which is signed by the members of the board. Charles H. Clark, manager of the ordnance department, president; John P. Thompson, captain, ordnance department member; W. S. Pierce, captain ordnance department, recorder. A number of tests were made. The first one or two I shall not read as they are not important, as they deal with rapidity and carrying, and also the single shot tests. But when they got to testing the rifle as a repeater, the report is as follows:

As repeater—time 1 minute—number of shots, 29.

In this and other tests in which the piece was used as a repeater, the magazine was charged from pasteboard boxes holding five cartridges each. The cartridges were intended to be poured from these boxes, using the latter as chargers. The boxes, however, were not of exactly the right shape and frequently failed to work satisfactorily.



Test No. 111—endurance.

In this test the piece was fired in a fixed rest.

First series of 50—At one charging of the magazine only four cartridges could be entered, due apparently to stacking of the first two.

Second series of 50—The same difficulty in charging magazine occurred several times. On one of these occasions the fact that the fifth cartridge had not entirely entered the magazine was not observed until an effort was made to close the bolt when a jam resulted.

Third series of 50—One miss fire occurred.

Fourth series of 50—A jam occurred after charging the magazine as noted in the second series. Two cases extracted with some difficulty.

Fifth series of 50—One miss-fire occurred.

Sixth series of 50—One empty case stuck, and in the effort to extract, a portion of the rim of the case was sheared off by the extractor. The case was rammed out from the muzzle. Another case failed to extract at first trial, but was extracted on second trial.

Seventh series of 50—No remarks.

Eight series of 50—Two cartridges missed fire at first trial, but fired when struck a second time. One cartridge failed to feed from magazine in closing the breach, but fed properly on second trial.

Ninth series of 50—The stacking in charging the magazine noted in the second series occurred once. Two cartridges missed fire and two cases required a second effort to extract.

Tenth series of 50—Three miss-fires occurred and one cartridge required two blows to fire it.

Series (b).

Five cartridges required two blows of the firing pin and five misfires occurred in this series. Three cases failed to extract after several blows due to shearing of the rim in the one case and over-riding of the extractor in the others, and had to be rammed out from the muzzle. One case required a second effort to extract and another several efforts. One jam resulted from throwing the magazine on by accidentally moving the catch lever.

Then comes the series of August 10 :  
August 19, 1903.

Test No. 4—Dust.

After dusting as prescribed for two minutes, the piece was fired 20 rounds as follows :

(a) Magazine empty when dusted. Before firing the magazine to be loaded and held in reserve until 15 rounds are fired as a single loader ; then the cartridges in the magazine to be fired.

Three misfires occurred. The mechanism worked rather stiffly at first, the cut-off requiring some manipulation before it functioned properly.

(b) Magazine loaded when dusted. The cartridges to be removed and wiped before firing, and piece used as a repeater.

Six misfires occurred and three cartridges required two blows of the firing pin.

Test No. 6—Excessive charges.

This test was taken up before test No. 5 pending the preparation of the defective cartridges required for the latter test. Cartridges giving a chamber pressure of 75,000 pounds per square inch were used.

1st round.—The primer blew out of the case giving what practically amounted to a blow back. The bayonet lock in the rear end of the bolt-head which held the main-spring sleeve in place was destroyed by the breaking off of part the part in rear of the slot forming the lock, and the firing pin was forced about one inch to the rear.

Mr. SAM HUGHES. Would the hon. member (Mr. Worthington) read that again ? What blew back, the cartridge or the rifle ?

Mr. WORTHINGTON. The primer blew out of the case.

The remainder of this test was discontinued for the time.

Test No. 5—Defective cartridges.

Defective No. 1.

The bolt shield was bent up and the forward end broken off. The slot in the bottom of the bolt sleeve at the rear end in which the lug of the cocking piece slides was contracted and bound the cocking-piece slightly. This was remedied by filing out the slot until the movement was free. The shield was removed before the next round.

Defective No. 2.

The cartridge missed fire. As it appeared that without the bolt shield

the firing pin might be released in the event of the release of the firing pin withdrawn for alteration. The possibility of closing the breach, the rifle was as noted was due to the fact that with the shield removed the bolt sleeve is not supported by the guide groove on the right side of the receiver and can therefore rise at the rear end sufficiently to disengage the cocking piece from the rear.

The inventor then submitted for a continuation of the detective cartridge test a second rifle which differed only in length of barrel and a few similar details from the one withdrawn and the test was recommenced.

Defective No. 1.—The bolt shield was entirely blown off the edge engaged in the receiver groove, being stripped and remaining in the groove.

In both these rounds the cartridges were so placed in the chamber that one of the cuts in the head pointed up and the gas escaping upwards struck against the under edge of the front of the shield with the results noted. It was evident that the shield was not strong enough to withstand the blow and that some modification in it was necessary. The second rifle was accordingly withdrawn and further trial discontinued pending changes to be made in the shield.

The next test, No. 6, was a test with excessive charges. As before, cartridges were used giving a chamber pressure of 75,000 pounds to the square inch—five rounds used.

1st round.—No remarks.

2nd round.—The firing pin appeared to move stiffly on examination after this round, apparently from fouling due to the previous rounds with defective cartridges.

3rd round.—The action of the firing pin same as after previous round. The bolt was cleaned before the next round.

4th round.—A blow back occurred. The firing pin moved with greater difficulty. On examination it was found that the rear of the cocking-piece slot in the bolt sleeve was slightly burred, binding the movement of the cocking-piece and firing pin. This portion of the bolt sleeve had not been hardened. The burrs were filed off and the test proceeded with.

5th round.—A partial blow back occurred. The case could not be ex-

tracted by hand, but on the second trial using the foot to move the bolt back the case was extracted.

Now, Mr. Speaker, that is the test of the rifle as made in the Springfield armoury.

Mr. SAM HUGHES. What is the date?

Mr. WORTHINGTON. August, 1903.

Mr. SAM HUGHES. And what is the date of mine?

Mr. WORTHINGTON. I do not see any date on yours. Possibly this report is made after that of the hon. gentleman.

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN (Minister of Militia). I would like to ask for some definite information as to this report—as to where the hon. gentleman (Mr. Worthington) got it; whether he knows that the rifles supplied were of the same kind that Sir Charles Ross is delivering to the Canadian government and so on. I think we are entitled to know something about this report.

Mr. WORTHINGTON. This report, I know, emanated from the Springfield armoury in Massachusetts, and was made on rifles submitted to that board by Sir Charles Ross himself.

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. Can the hon. gentleman (Mr. Worthington) give us any evidence—the names of the board?

Mr. WORTHINGTON. I have already read the names of the board. I will read the first part of the report:

The board met at 10 a.m., August 6th, 1903, pursuant to the verbal instructions of the commanding officer. Present, all the members. Meetings were continued from time to time until the tests were completed.

Sir Charles Ross appeared before the board and presented his magazine rifle for examination and test.

So, I presume, this was an authentic test of the rifle.

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. I suppose this is taken from a printed document?

Mr. WORTHINGTON. This is a typewritten copy.

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. If I may be allowed to interject a word here, the papers which have been brought down to this House are given with full authority from the Department of Militia and Defence. It seems to me that the House ought to be

seized of the origin of this report, and ought to have proof of its genuineness.

Mr. SAM HUGHES. There is nothing seriously wrong with it.

Mr. WORTHINGTON. This report winds up as follows :

Approved, and concurring in the opinion of the board that there is no advantage to be gained from further experiments with the Ross rifle.

(Signed) FRANK H. PHIPPS,

Colonel, Ord. Dept., U.S.A.,

Commanding.

Springfield Armoury, October 17th, 1903.

Now, it seems to me that on these reports mainly, this Ross rifle was adopted. And the result is, a site was given on the historic battlefields of Quebec to the Ross Rifle Company, and in a building on that site the company is now manufacturing,— or, rather, assembling from the small arms factory of the United States — the component parts of this rifle. A contract was entered into between Sir Charles Ross and the Department of Militia and Defence, the preamble of which is as follows :

"Whereas, it is considered in the general interest of Canada that the rifles required by the government for the purposes of militia and defence should be manufactured in Canada, and whereas the contractor has proposed by himself or his assignee to undertake the establishment and operation of a suitable factory in Canada for the manufacture of such rifles and to supply the government with the rifles so required, manufactured at the same factory and delivered at a cost to the government not exceeding that which the government would have to pay for similar rifles purchased by or for the government as heretofore in the English market."

That is a reason for the rifle being manufactured in Canada. I would like to explain some facts concerning the importation of the component parts of this rifle from the United States. The great cry in favor of the Ross rifle was that it was to be made wholly in Canada, a Canadian product, so that if, in case of trouble, we were cut off from the motherland, we should have our source of supply within our own borders. This was a very commendable idea but it will be seen

that for some years back we have been living in a false paradise, for no less than from 17 to 20 of the component parts of the Ross rifle have been made in the United States. Suppose we were called upon to-morrow to defend our southern border from invasion, what position would we be in with the component parts of our rifles manufactured in the small arms factories of the United States?

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. Does my hon. friend say there are seventeen parts of the rifle completely manufactured in the United States?

Mr. WORTHINGTON. I will go further than that and say there were more than that made at one time.

Mr. CARVELL. Now?

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. We are talking about the present.

Mr. WORTHINGTON. I am talking about the condition of affairs until the time the 'Star' got on to the job. I do not know that there are now as many, but there are some, and if the minister makes inquiry from the Quebec Central Railway Company, I think he will find they are coming through in barrels, almost as many as ever.

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. That is where you get your information, is it?

Mr. CARVELL. Would the hon. gentleman give the names of the different parts manufactured in the United States?

Mr. WORTHINGTON. I will give them all in a minute. The minister does not anticipate any trouble with the United States, he has already sheltered himself behind the Monroe doctrine and is very fond of entwining the Old Glory with the Union Jack on festive occasions. On one occasion, at Windsor, Ont., while he was engaged in the exchange of international banquets, the Union Jack, almost at the moment he was speaking, was being trailed in the dust at Detroit; so the time may come when the hon. gentleman will regret the terms of that contract.

In this connection I wish to draw the attention of the House to the minister's straight denial of the fact that parts of the rifle were manufactured in the United States, a statement I believe to be not only absolutely incorrect but wilfully misleading.

Mr. SPEAKER. I think the hon. member has gone a little far; the statement 'willfully misleading' can hardly be permitted.

Mr. WORTHINGTON. The statement was not only absolutely incorrect but had the effect of appearing willfully misleading, for at this very time importations had been and were going on from the United States in large quantities as the payments to Billings & Spencer, Hartford, Conn., will show. I have here a statement of payments to Billings & Spencer for 1902 and 1903, which is as follows: Quebec, June 11, 1903.

PAYMENTS ON ACCOUNT OF MATERIALS.

1902.

Oct. 16, To Billings & Spencer Co., rifle forgings .....	\$4,044.37
Dec. 22, To Billings & Spencer Co., barrels, bands, etc.	4,814.47 (4,912.72)
Dec. 24, To Billings & Spencer Co., freight, sundries....	106.60
Dec. 29, To Billings & Spencer Co., receivers .....	2.72
Dec. 29, To Billings & Spencer Co., rear bands ... ..	11.54
1903.	
Jan. 27, To Billings & Spencer Co., receivers .....	1.74
Feb. 9, To Billings & Spencer Co., barrels, eac .....	8,438.64
Feb. 23, To Billings & Spencer Co., freight, sundries....	163.59
April 23, To Billings & Spencer Co., freight, sundries....	75.21
April 23, To Billings & Spencer Co., barrels, pins, etc....	4,241.67
March 4, To Billings & Spencer Co., sight leafs ... ..	149.40

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. Surely my hon. friend knows that these are steel forgings and not completed parts. That was proved in the Public Accounts Committee, and he knows it very well.

Mr. WORTHINGTON. Then there are a number of items during March which I believe to be fixtures and which no doubt came in quite legitimately, amounting to about \$10,000, which I shall not read.

I have here another statement of payments to Billings & Spencer amounting to \$17,681.92, the items of which are as follows:

BILLINGS & SPENCER.

1903.

Feb. 9, Gun barrels, \$7,582. Bolt sleeves, 427.
Feb. 9, Bolts, \$12,382.....Butt plates, 8,045.
Feb. 9, Trigger guards, 83,600.
Feb. 9, Rear banks, \$9,370.
“ Receivers, \$5,038.
“ Sears, \$15,038.
“ Triggers, \$4,857.

I wish to quote from the 'Hansard' a few questions and answers showing the minister's denial of the fact that any parts were made in the United States. On May 14, 1906, at page 3246 of 'Hansard,' I asked the following question and received the minister's answer:

Ques.—Is any part or parts of the Ross rifle manufactured in the United States? If so, what parts and by what company?—Ans., No.

The minister's answer could not have been more explicit. On January 14, 1907, the following questions and answer appear:—

Ques. 1.—Are any parts of the Ross rifle manufactured by Messrs. Billings & Spencer, of Hartford, Connecticut? If so, what parts?

2. Are these parts dutiable? If so, under what clause do they come?

3. Is it the intention of this company to establish a branch factory in this country? If so, at what place?

4. Is this company incorporated in the Dominion of Canada? If so, under what statute or Act?

5. Who are the members of the company?

6. What contracts, if any, exist between this firm and the Ross Rifle company?

Hon. Sir FREDERICK BORDEN (Minister of Militia). We have no information in the Department of Militia with regard to any of these questions. I have made inquiries at the Customs Department and find that nothing is known about the matter there.

I hope my hon. friend the Minister of Customs was not going round with concealed arms, as well as the Minister of Militia, because we have these invoices from Billings & Spencer amounting to many thousands, and yet this firm is unknown at either department. At this very time Billings & Spencer had incorporated in Canada and were hunting for a suitable place

to establish a factory. They are situated now, I understand, at Welland, Ont., where they are manufacturing forgings. Some of their drop forgings are manufactured there but some are imported from the United States, at least all the important parts of this rifle. At page 1107, Vol. II., 1906-7, I find the following:—

Question.—Is it true that parts of the Ross rifle manufactured by the Ross Rifle Company at Quebec are imported into this country from the United States; if so, what parts? A.—Yes, flat springs.

Q.—Have any parts of said rifles been manufactured by Messrs. Billings & Spencer, of Hartford? If so, what parts? A.—No, but some rough drop forgings had been supplied by Messrs. Billings & Spencer.

Then the Minister of Customs gave the amounts which had come in. For the year ending June, 1904, parts had been imported to the amount of \$38,116; 1905, \$28,939; 1906, \$38,314.

Mr. TAYLOR. Were duties collected on parts?

Mr. WORTHINGTON. Everything comes in free for this company. The fact seems to have been established in 1906 that the Ross Rifle Company were manufacturing the component parts of their rifle largely in the United States. This fact has been more recently brought out by the Montreal 'Star' and the Boston 'Herald.' The Montreal 'Star' seems to have taken a trip into the interior of the Department of Militia, with the result that one of their agents visited the United States and found that Frank Mossberg, of Attleboro', Mass., in his bicycle bell and manure factory was manufacturing seventeen or eighteen parts of the Ross rifle. Although these facts were published and were brought before the government in the Montreal 'Star' and the Boston 'Herald' under large headlines, there does not seem to have been any denial of them in this House, or any denial of any authority of the Department of Militia. The Montreal 'Star' of March 4th 1908, published an article under the following heading:

"Essential parts of the Ross rifle are to-day being made by United States factories."

"Canada's national rifle factory would have to stop operation if com-

munications with the American republic were broken. Seventeen important parts turned out by one manufacturer in Massachusetts. New national enterprise inaugurated six years ago is still dependent upon foreign makers. Some interesting excerpts from testimony before parliamentary committee."

Then it goes on to state that a representative of the 'Star' visited Mr. Frank Mossberg's bicycle bell and manure factory and found that, behind closed doors, all these component parts were being manufactured under the contract with Sir Charles Ross for Canada's arm of defence; the factory was to be established at Quebec, and the rifle was to have been manufactured in Canada.

The Boston 'Herald,' in a tone of blasphemy, described the Ross rifle factory as being as useless as a cheese factory. The Boston 'Herald' of March 5th contains the following:

"CANADIAN ARMY RIFLES MOSTLY AMERICAN. SEVENTEEN LEADING PARTS OF ROSS WEAPON MADE IN ATTLEBORO. Contract calls for manufacture in Quebec."

This paper enters into a description of the component parts of the rifle that are sent here. I will read a part of it:

"The rifle is turned out by the Ross Rifle Company, of Quebec, a firm made possible by its contract with the Crown, and subsidized by the Canadian Government. The head of the firm is Sir Charles Ross, a Scotch baronet. The contract under which he was granted the right to manufacture the standard military arm specifies that it shall be strictly a Canadian product.

However, all the Canadian workmen have to do is to assemble the pieces, and hand over the finished product. Only one principal part of the work do they attend to—the boring and rifling of the barrels.

The steel from which the barrels are made comes from Pittsburg, Pennsylvania.

The wood for fashioning the stocks is ordered through a New York firm and is carried up the St. Lawrence in ships from Europe.

The forgings from which trigger guards, receivers and bolt sleeves are manufactured, are made by the Spen-

cer-Billings Company, of Hartford, Connecticut. The springs are made in England.

The metal punchings and the pressed, stamped or dyed steel parts are made by the Frank Mossberg Company, of Attleboro, Massachusetts.

In case of war or any national emergency requiring the immediate supply of arms, the Ross rifle factory, quietly reposing behind the big guns of Quebec's impregnable citadel, would be about as much use as a cheese factory."

That is what the Boston 'Herald' says.

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. That is conclusive.

Mr. WORTHINGTON. Yes. In what condition were these parts brought in? Many of them were brought in from the Mossberg factory ready to be put into the gun, in a finished condition. I have a letter from a man who served four or five years in the Mossberg factory, and it is as follows:

Dear Sir,—I got your letter yesterday. In reply would say that I have worked for the Frank Mossberg Company, of Attleboro, for over five years in two different times. The first time was seven years ago and worked for them four and a half years, and left their employment for about six months and went back for them for another year and left them the last a little over a year ago.

Now, about the manufacturing parts of the Ross rifle, I can't say how many parts are made, and name them as there are many parts that I don't know by name, but I can show them on the rifle.

As for the parts that I remember I can give you a list of them that were made just a year ago.

The pawl.

The sear.

The trigger.

The stock plate.

The lifter is made in two parts and assembled in the Mossberg shop.

As near as I can remember there must be between 15 to 20 parts made there, and all sent ready to be put in the rifle, except a few parts that have to be case-hardened, as every part is made of machinery steel, cold rolled. Find enclosed a few sketches of parts made there that I made some of the tools for myself.

Hoping this will help you a little.

I remains, yours,

(Sgd.) X. T. DELORME.

Here is a drawing of the parts which he has made from memory, after having been engaged in making these parts. On March 5th, 1908, the Montreal 'Star' comes out with another big sensational column, headed as follows:

"HOW MR. MOSSBERG, OF MASSACHUSETTS, CAME TO MAKE SEVENTEEN ESSENTIAL PARTS OF ROSS RIFLE. Visit to the factory at Attleboro where, behind locked doors, force is working hard on 'Canadian rifle' contracts. Make every effort to keep visitors from seeing the work in progress. In interview with 'Star' reporter. Mr. Mossberg says he joined hands with Sir Charles Ross on a purely business basis. One asks for goods, the other sells them.

Then on March 10th, Mr. Mossberg pays a hurried visit to Ottawa, and the Montreal 'Star' reported the visit under the following heading:

Sir Charles Ross issues hurry up call to Mr. Mossberg to explain.

Massachusetts manufacturer in Montreal this morning after session of Ross rifle authorities makes interesting statement.

Mossberg goes on to say in this paper that although there are certain affidavits he is still doing business at the old stand and manufacturing most of the component parts of the Ross rifle.

Mr. A. K. MACLEAN. He denied that the next day in the Montreal 'Star.'

Mr. WORTHINGTON. He did not deny it in the 'Star.' The 'Star' confirms the report that his previous statements were practically correct.

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. Is my hon. friend (Mr. Worthington) aware of the fact that Sir Charles Ross has specifically denied this whole statement, and that this Mr. "Mossback," or whatever his name is, also made a denial?

Mr. WORTHINGTON. I don't quite understand what the minister has said.

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. I suppose the hon. gentleman is aware, or perhaps he is not aware, that Sir Charles Ross has specifically denied the allegations made in that paper

and that this "Mossville," or "Mossback," or whatever his name is, also denied that he made such statements as are attributed to him in the 'Star' or to the 'Star' reporter?

Mr. WORTHINGTON. I know there are a great many "Mossbacks" connected with the rifle, but if this Mr. "Mossback" was not guilty of manufacturing parts of the Ross rifle why did he come up here on Sir Charles Ross' suggestion? What call had Sir Charles Ross on Mr. "Mossback," and why did he respond so quickly to the call?

Mr. A. K. MACLEAN. Who says he did? You don't know. That is a newspaper statement.

Mr. WORTHINGTON. Mr. Mossback was here for two or three days, and he confirmed every statement he made previously. He says he personally made a number of these parts until a year ago, and if the hon. gentleman will inquire at Welland, Ont., where the Billings & Spencer Company are now doing business, he will find that although they are making some drop forgings, and very good drop-forgings, they are still importing at least three of the essential parts of the rifle from the United States at Welland, Ont. Established here for the same reason, is uppos as the factory at Quebec, "Under the guns of the fleet." The fleet, the right hon. gentleman who leads this House is allowing his American friends to bring up through Canadian waters, and assemble on the Great Lakes.

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. I am glad the hon. gentleman approves of the drop forgings.

Mr. FOSTER. It would be a mighty poor case if he could not find something good in the whole thing.

Mr. LANCASTER. It is a proper thing for a committee to investigate.

Mr. WORTHINGTON. Now as to the contract between the government and the Ross Rifle Company. This contract was one of the most ridiculous and unbusinesslike contracts ever entered into by an business like government and was a totally one-sided affair. According to the terms of this agreement the Department of Militia and Defence was to purchase from the Ross Rifle Company a number of Ross rifles at the rate of 10,000 a year at the price of \$25 a

piece, the company to receive an advance payment of 75 per cent. on the selling price of the rifles on advance estimates. The company was also allowed to import the machinery and raw material free of duty. This means that the government actually became the bankers of this company, which had previously received a free site on the Plains of Abraham at Quebec for the nominal fee of \$1 a year, for 99 years, with the option of extension. It is needless to discuss the manner in which this site was obtained. The lease in its present form is simply a subterfuge to alienate portions of the Plains of Abraham. The reasons advanced by the government for locating at this point, as we were told by Mr. Nesbitt in the Public Accounts Committee, was that the factory would be under the guns of the fleet. Which fleet is not stated. Possibly it is the fleet which the right hon. gentleman and his government have accepted the protection of since they came into power, but towards which they have refused to contribute one cent. It certainly is not the fleet of vessels which might be giving us protection on our Atlantic and Pacific sea-board to-day, had the right hon. gentleman and his government contributed towards instead of putting money into the pockets of the British ratepayers through the British preference. However, one thing is certain, in the granting of this site, and that is, there must have been a straight pull on the site as well as on the gun. The Ross Company has been assembling the component parts of this rifle and putting them together at a price of \$25, which is more than the cost of the Lee-Enfield or the new Springfield, the American rifle.

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. That statement is incorrect.

Mr. WORTHINGTON. Which statement?

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. As to price.

Mr. WORTHINGTON. The \$25?

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. The statement as to the price of the English rifle and as to the price of the American rifle is incorrect.

Mr. WORTHINGTON. As to the price of the American rifle I am going to take the word of one of the Minister's own Rifle Commissioners, and

that is, Colonel Anderson, who in writing to the 'Militia Gazette' concerning the Palma trophy and the respective merits of the Lee-Enfield and the new Springfield rifle, states that the price of the Springfield rifle is \$15. Possibly some of these commissioners do not know anything about rifles, but I am willing to accept Colonel Anderson's statement that \$15 is the price of the rifle.

Mr. SAM HUGHES. Possibly he took the erratic figures of the hon. member for Sherbrooke last session.

Mr. WORTHINGTON. In view of the price which the Government is paying for the Ross rifle and the terms under which it was to be delivered, I would like to consider the previous armament of our militia and the value and stability of the rifle with which it was armed. During a discussion of this matter on February 26th, 1907, I quoted a letter from Messrs. Greener, small arms manufacturer in England, to the effect that they would supply this government with the new pattern British army rifle with bayonet complete for 80 shillings if large lots were required. Now, as the minister knows, there is always a 5 per cent. discount for cash on these firearms and they are generally delivered f.o.b. at a British port in cases at that price. The letter also states:

We may tell you that we are making large quantities for Australia at the present time.

I also had a letter from a colonel in the militia who has been several times at Bisley in which he states that men of the Bisley team have frequently while there bought in the open market Lee-Enfields. Greener make rifles at £3. 10. Mr. Henry Burns, of New Haven, Conn., who at one time was in the employ of the Ross Rifle Company, states that \$25 is not too much for the Ross rifle manufactured as it is under the present management, but he states it could be manufactured for the same price as the Springfield or 'Model 90,' Winchester, which I believe is \$15. Now, the former Conservative government bought the same rifle, the Lee-Enfield, for about an average cost of \$17, as was quoted by the Minister of Militia himself.

Mr. TAYLOR. That included the bayonet?

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. No. The Lee-Enfield rifle cost delivered here \$26.40, bought from the trade.

Mr. TAYLOR. Does that include the bayonet.

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. No, it includes the cost of inspection.

Mr. TAYLOR. And duty added?

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. Certainly, the hon. gentleman is a protectionist.

Mr. FOWLER. And you are bringing all the parts of the Ross rifle free into this country.

Mr. WORTHINGTON. I think the hon. minister has stated differently elsewhere, which I will try to show before concluding my remarks. Practically the difference in cost between the Ross rifle and the Lee-Enfield rifle is in the vicinity of \$10, which would make a difference on 100,000 rifles of \$1,000,000. A man prominent in the United States Small Arms Manufacturing Company states that the Ross rifle could be made at a profit for \$15. But when discussing the cost of take into account the cost of the factory, the rent of land, the interest on capital and all that sort of thing. I do not know why we should in this case. The Minister and the late deputy Minister of Militia have stated, and it has been sworn to by many in the Public Accounts Committee, that the Ross Rifle Company is a private concern doing business with the government. So these things should not be taken into account. When the minister buys boots for the militia, he does not take into account the rent of the Slater Shoe Company, he buys boots in the open market. So in buying uniforms for the militia, the minister does not take into account the cost of the Sanford factory.

So if the Greener people are prepared to deliver British Army rifles, latest pattern, with bayonets complete, for 80 shillings, with the usual discount, 5 per cent., f.o.b., in cases at British ports, why should we accept the minister's statement that the Lee-Enfield cost \$26.40 delivered here, bought from the trade.

As regards the record of the Lee-Enfield rifle, which we are casting aside, I would refer to the remarks of Lord Roberts made at the close of the



South African war, He said it had been brought to his attention on more than one occasion that when the Boers picked up a Lee-Enfield rifle on the line of march they so preferred it to the Mausur that they threw away the latter and took the Lee-Enfield. Mr. Haldane, late Secretary of War, in his report, stated that the Lee-Enfield had been subjected to many hardships in South Africa and the northern parts of India and had proved a most satisfactory arm. In addition to these recommendations may be added the significant fact that it is still retained by Canadian marksmen in all international contests, at Bisley, and almost entirely in the Dominion and provincial rifle matches. In fact, it is seldom that a Ross rifle is seen on the ranges in competition unless in the hands of some marks-men of note who has been employed by the company to exploit the gun.

Mr. SAM HUGHES. May I ask the hon. gentleman how is it that the English people are so obtuse as not to use the new Lee-Enfield rifle? Why do they stick to the old Lee-Enfield on the ranges at Bisley?

Mr. WORTHINGTON. Because they think the old rifle the best, I suppose. I might ask, why don't they take the Ross rifle? Now, Mr. Speaker, as the hon. gentleman has introduced the subject of the new Lee-Enfield rifle, I may say that the London Small Arms Company are prepared to supply 10,000,303 Lee-Enfield rifles, at 80 shillings each, packed in tin-lined cases, and delivered f.o.b. at a British port, subject to 5 per cent. discount for cash, which bring it to about 75 shillings, and the cost of inspection. The new Lee-Enfield rifle is quoted in their catalogue at several dollars more than the present Lee-Enfield.

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. The hon. gentleman, I suppose, knows that the upright view is a very inferior rifle. It is not the War Office test at all. I would like to have the date at which that quotation was made.

Mr. WORTHINGTON. It was made this month. In regard to this contract, what the public of Canada wants to know is, how it is that the Ross Rifle Company have been able to get such an amount of coddling from the government. A site for a nominal rental, free importation of

machinery and raw material; 75 per cent. advance on working estimates, and estimate after estimate paid on orders, months and even years before the delivery of the previous orders. Most industries would never dream of asking a government to provide them with capital upon which to start their enterprise. They would be satisfied to get a protective duty upon their output. Even a contractor working entirely for the government is expected to supply his own capital and live up to the terms of his contract. But the Ross Rifle Company, it appears, has been required to do none of those things. The government openly becomes its bankers, pledges itself to advance the money for the purpose of enabling it to purchase raw material, and even for the payment of wages up to 75 per cent. of the value of the completed rifles ordered. This was a very generous proposition—

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. If it were true. But the hon. gentleman surely knows better than that. Why should he persist in misrepresenting the company and the government in this way?

Mr. WORTHINGTON. Am I to understand from the minister that the government are not advancing 75 per cent. on the working estimates?

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. The hon. gentleman will understand from me that the government are not advancing capital to the Ross Company, and he knows it. Why should he persist in making that statement?

Mr. WORTHINGTON. The government are paying the Ross Rifle Company 75 per cent. advance on the working estimates, which amounts to \$18.25 or thereabouts, and which is several dollars more than the price of the Lee-Enfield, or the new Springfield rifle; so that I think I am practically right in saying that the government is supplying working capital to the company and even becoming responsible for the wage account up to 75 per cent. of their orders.

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. Not at all. The hon. gentleman knows that Colonel Wurtele's evidence before the Public Accounts Committee proves that out of \$1,100,000 which had been paid over to the Ross Rifle Company, the Ross Company had expended on the work alone of manufacturing the

rifle \$100,000 more than that, besides the cost of building and the cost of the machinery, and that \$20,000 out of the \$1,200,000 had gone to pay laborers in the city of Quebec. The hon. gentleman knows that, and why should he persist in making these statements?

Mr. WORTHINGTON. I am stating practically what is in the contract.

Mr. FOSTER. Is not the money that Sir Charles Ross pays his labor working capital? If the government had not advanced it, would not Sir Charles Ross have had to get it elsewhere?

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. What the hon. gentleman means, I take it, is that the government advanced to the Ross Rifle Company its entire working capital. What he knows is that Sir Charles Ross constructed his building and put in his machinery, and he must have had capital in order to do this, because he did not get the money from the government until after the work was done.

Mr. FOSTER. I understand the hon. gentleman said that the government provided the capital for working the concern, and it absolutely does.

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. But it did not buy the machinery.

Mr. FOSTER. Nobody said it did.

Mr. WORTHINGTON. This proposition was of such a generous nature that the government felt itself obliged to limit it, and so required that the rifle must be delivered within the year in which these advances were made. But after having made this proposition, the government soon proceeded to ignore it. It made its first advance, on this first order of 12,000 rifles, in March 1903, and did not get its first delivery until August, 1905.

Mr. SAM HUGHES. Whose report is that?

Mr. WORTHINGTON. I am reading from the blue book.

Mr. A. K. MACLEAN. Does the contract require that these rifles must be actually delivered into the possession of the government before the advances are made?

Mr. WORTHINGTON. I am not saying whether it does or not. I am stating what happened until the intervention of the Auditor General. The government made its first advance on this first order of 12,000 rifles in March, 1903, and did not get its first

delivery until August, 1905. It had made all its advance payments up to the full 75 per cent. of the selling value of the whole order by July, 1904, when there were still 3,000 of these rifles to be delivered. This is an example of the manner in which the agreement was kept. The advance on the second order of rifles began in February, 1905, though the delivery of the first order had not been commenced and the second order was then 3,000 short.

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. I know how anxious the hon. gentleman is not to mislead the House. Does he not know that the balance of 3,000, which were short on the first order of 12,000, was delivered in the form of Mark II., and there was no shortage on that 12,000 order?

Mr. WORTHINGTON. What difference does it make whether they are marked one or two?

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. The hon. gentleman is trying to create the impression that this government advanced 75 per cent. on 3,000 rifles and never got anything for it.

Mr. WORTHINGTON. I do not say that. I say they got them later, but the delivery was three years behind. I say that the government had made all its advance payments up to the full 75 per cent. of the selling value of the whole order by July, 1904, when there were still 3,000 of these rifles to be delivered. The advance on the second order of rifles began in February, 1905 though the delivery of the first order had not then commenced, and the second order was then 3,000 short. Advances were made in February, 1906, on the third order, and though for a long time no delivery was made, advances began on the fourth order.

This question of advances and delivery then assumed vexatious proportions. The company was usually two years behind in the delivery of the goods, although their contract called for delivery the same year as that in which the advance payments were made and it was only when attention was called through the press to the fact that Mark I. rifles, on which the whole advances were paid three years ago, had not then been delivered, and that the company was two years in arrears on some later contracts, that the advances were stopped, and for three or four months there was nothing

ing doing in the way of payments. This was largely due to the fact that the Minister of Militia was absent in England. During his absence, the Auditor-General and the acting minister, Sir Richard Cartwright, had stopped these payments, and it is understood that there were some hot times trying to finance the company, and some warm discussions in the Militia Council. However, on the return of the hon. gentleman, the financing of the company was a very easy matter.

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. Will the hon. gentleman inform me where he gets his information about what goes on in the Militia Council?

Mr. FOSTER. He got it from one of your own ministers, when he told us that you fought like blazes.

Mr. WORTHINGTON. This question of advanced payments and deliveries culminated in the refusal of the Auditor-General to sanction any more advances, and he suggested, as one of his reasons, that we might find ourselves in possession of a lot of material only fit to be sent to the junk heap and on which we had made large advances. Does the hon. minister dispute that statement? He has disputed everything else.

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. The Auditor-General was new then. It was just after he got office.

Mr. FOSTER. You have him broken in by this time.

Mr. WORTHINGTON. The correspondence makes it clear that a deadlock occurred until an order in council was passed extending the time for delivery of the rifles. On May 13, 1907, the Auditor-General wrote to Colonel Fiset, Deputy Minister of Militia, as follows:

I notice that you paid to March 31, 1907, on account Mark II, 1906, order, \$272,441.04, and \$11,250 on Mark III, although apparently no rifles have been delivered.

Paragraph 8 of the contract allows 75 per cent. of the advance of the costs of only such rifles as are to be delivered in that year. Pending your explanation of the non-observance of this part of the contract in connection with the payments made on account of the rifles, I would ask that no further payments be made to Sir Charles Ross on account, out of your letter of credit.

To this letter Colonel Fiset replied: I attach herewith the statement call-

ed for in paragraph 2 of the above mentioned memo, showing the payments that have been made to the Ross Rifle Company up to date. Up to the present date, the department has paid to the Ross Rifle Company, \$329,743.55 in advance on progress estimates. My predecessor, Col. Pincault was of opinion that the Ross Rifle Company in accordance with the terms of the contract, were entitled to 75 per cent. progress estimates on all orders, received, independent of delivery, and acting on his advice, my minister had always authorized these payments.

Then comes a statement of the payments:

The statement attached showed that up to May 14, 1907, the following payments had been made:

Total advances .....	\$872,243.55
Twenty-six payments (final) at .....	6,250.00
Twenty-six thousand rifles received .....	162,500.00
	<hr/>
	\$1,034,743.55

27,000 received to date at \$25 each (no final) payment made on the last 1,000 received, \$675,000. Balance (this represents payments made on progress estimates on the 25,000 rifles still to be delivered by the company) \$39,743.55. The advances were made on account of orders given the company as follows:

No. 1, for delivery in 1903 .....	12,000
No. 2, for delivery in 1903 .....	10,000
No. 3, for delivery in 1903 .....	10,000
No. 4, for delivery in 1903 .....	10,000
No. 5, for delivery in 1903 .....	10,000

In his reply to Colonel Fiset, on May 23, the Auditor-General said that according to his interpretation of the contract, no advances should be made on account of work done or material supplied except on such rifles as might be delivered in the year. He added:

At present advances have been made amounting to about \$360,000. This represents over 15,000 completed rifles; and judging by the rates of delivery so far, it will tax the energy of the company to complete and deliver that number during the year.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. Would the hon. gentleman give the opinion of the Deputy Minister of Justice? The department was acting upon the advice of the Department of Justice.

Mr. WORTHINGTON. The Auditor-

General suggested, in conclusion, that an examination of all the stocks on hand and represented by progress estimates should be made by an expert competent to judge the value of the stock, "Otherwise," he said, "the department may find itself in possession of material to be consigned to the junk heap, for which large advances have been made." Now, there's a prophecy which possibly may soon be fulfilled. On May 28 the Deputy Minister of Militia wrote to the Auditor-General, inclosing the opinion of the Deputy Minister of Justice as to the advances made, as follows:

I see no reason to doubt that your department is liable to pay the accounts in question. It may be that you had a remedy against the contractor for breach of his contract to supply the rifles within the stipulated time, but you would have to proceed accordingly, and cannot yourself break another term of the contract as a sort of set-off against the contractor's breach of contract, which I suppose to be what your proposition really amounts to.

Referring to the ruling of the Justice Department, the Auditor-General said, after repeating his former argument:

If this ruling is accepted and acted upon, whither are we drifting? Does your department intend to advance 75 per cent. on 10,000 rifles for 1907 delivery and receive no rifles, 75 per cent. on 10,000 rifles for 1908 delivery and receive no rifles, and so on ad infinitum? I am not credulous enough to believe that the government would enter into a contract containing any such possibilities.

All I can say is that the Auditor-General did not know the government. The correspondence continued at intervals until August 6, 1907, when the Auditor-General wrote to Colonel Fiset a letter which is explanatory of what progress had been made towards the settlement of the dispute. He said:

"I received a copy of the order in council of July 27 last, extending the time for delivery of the balance of the Ross rifles ordered, viz.: 15,000 to be delivered before January 1, 1908, and 10,000 before June 1, 1908.

The Department of Justice having reported that under contract the company is entitled to advance on progress estimates on orders for rifles to be delivered up to 75 per cent. of the

cost of the rifles, and your department having agreed to appoint an officer competent to examine the books and accounts of the company and certify to the expenditure made on the rifles, and having had an interview with Sir Charles Ross and Colonel Wurtele, the proposed inspecting officer for the purpose, when it was agreed that a certain form of certified statements would be furnished this office, a copy of which statement was handed to me to-day and afterwards transmitted to you, I therefore withdraw the restriction placed on your letter of credit in connection with the payment of these advances."

Thus we find that through the intervention of the Minister of Justice the restrictions placed upon the letter of credit were withdrawn, and the ruling of the Auditor-General as to the payments for advance estimates was overruled. Now, before going on with my remarks as to the efficiency of the rifle, I would like to read letters from two of the former employees of the Ross Rifle Company, in order that the House and the public may see what was transpiring in the factory at the time. The first is a letter from Mr. R. Henry Burns, of New Haven, Conn. He was employed in the Ross Rifle factory in the latter part of 1903 and the early part of 1904. He said:

"I have made a speciality of the manufacture of guns for several years. I realized at that time that it was and would be impossible to manufacture guns under the system they had adopted. I understood the condition of affairs throughout when I was with this company, and as I was somewhat interested, I have kept in touch with the conditions that have existed ever since. I can safely say that the Ross Rifle Company has made no progress towards manufacturing their rifles since 1903, and I can positively say that they never will, under the present arrangements. From the general manager down to the men in charge of the several manufacturing departments, there was not a man that had had any experience in the manufacture of guns until he entered the employ of the Ross Rifle Company. I should judge that there is a strong feeling that an Al rifle should be manufactured on Canadian soil. The United States government manufacture their rifles and bayonets very

satisfactorily. There is no reason why your government cannot do likewise. \$25 is not too much for the Ross rifle, manufactured as it is under the present management. It can be manufactured for the same price as the Smithfield or the model 90 Winchester (\$15).

Mr. SAM. HUGHES. What is the date of that letter?

Mr. WORTHINGTON. The date is torn off. I can give the hon. gentleman (Mr. Sam. Hughes) the original. Another employee is Mr. J. H. Stanton, who wrote from St. Catharines, as follows:

St. Catharines, December 11, 1905.  
Sir F. W. Borden, K.C.M.G.

Sir,—I trust you will pardon me for taking the liberty to write you and ask a simple question. Are the shops now running in Quebec and known as the Ross Rifle Factory, being run as a private enterprise or are they being run as a government concern? My one idea in asking this question of you is to get at a few simple facts.

He goes on to state at the conclusion of his letter:

I have been advised to take this course by Mr. E. J. Lovelace, our defeated member for the county of Lincoln.

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. Mr. Lovelace never wrote. He never supported that letter.

Mr. LANCASTER. He is postmaster there now.

Mr. WORTHINGTON. The deputy minister wrote back telling Mr. Stanton that the Ross rifle factory was a private concern. Mr. Stanton wrote the following letter:

St. Catharines, December 28, 1905.  
Department of Militia and Defence,  
Ottawa, Ont.

"Sir,—Your favor in answer to my inquiry regarding the Ross rifle factory at Quebec received and fully noted, and in reply to same will say:

From authority gained in the factory the Ross Rifle Company is a false face, and the factory is a government concern, and a veritable sink-hole as bad as the Curran bridge or Langevin block."

It is needless to comment on these comparisons. All Liberals know how bad these two deals were said to be. We heard a great deal about them, and they were supposed to be very rotten.

"The rifles they are turning out are

useless and worthless as a military arm and for several reasons, too, and would not be accepted by any country wanting a first-class military arm.

Many of the arms now being turned out will not stand 100 shots in succession without becoming a complete rattletrap, and a danger to anyone using them, and will be pitched in a scrap heap."

He has anticipated the Auditor General there.

"While, I am a thorough supporter of the present government, the country is being robbed by aliens, and there must be a thorough investigation. Perhaps the government can afford to wink at this, but the evidence will be pie to the opposition. If this develops into a McGreevy, Curran bridge or Langevin block scandal, the government must stand pat, as a warning note is sounded."

In another letter in January, 1906, he said:

"I have no object in view except to protect the land of my birth and born of United Empire Loyalist stock. I may say as a prelude I was not popular, because I found fault with the drawings furnished for men to work from. It was the remark of the men without exception that they were the crudest attempts at drawings they had even had put in their hand to work with."

And further on:

"I have not said anything regarding the construction of the gun they are now turning out. The original Ross rifle was a fairly serviceable arm, but the one they are now building I would prefer to have it reported on by a thorough expert in military arms."

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. That would be Mark I then?

Mr. WORTHINGTON. Mark I.

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. You will not have a good opinion of Stanton after that?

Mr. WORTHINGTON. (Reading).

"If you would care to satisfy yourself on one point alone, write to either the Winchester Arms Company, New Haven, Conn., or the Marlin Arms Company, same address, Remington Arms Company, Iilon, N.J., or the Savage Arms Company, N.J., or any company in Great Britain building military arms, and ask them if they approve of using a thread, four to the inch, or a four pitch, to join the barrel to the receiver and you will get

a prompt reply. I have it from the Winchester, Marlin and Savage people, saying we do not approve of such a coarse pitch for a rifle using such heavy charges. Just say the arm is to use the heavy government charges. Another serious defect: The action is not fastened to the stock in any way except by the three bands around the barrel and stock. The wood under the action is cut away to receive the magazine till there is no strength left to it and many of them will not stand one hundred shots fired from them without the stock becoming a complete wreck. The working mechanism is complicated with a number of small parts and spring and very easy to go wrong in the hands of a novice, and the arm is useless."

I read this letter because the remarks continued in it are practically substantiated by the reports of many of the Militia Boards of Enquiry later assembled to pronounce on the rifle.

In order to study the quality of the rifle in relation to its stability and efficiency it is necessary for us to take a transcontinental tour from Halifax to Vancouver, for really the rifle has been condemned from one end of the country to the other. A board was held at Halifax. The report of that board was forwarded by Col. Cotton and reads as follows:

Headquarters, October 8, 1906.

From the Master General of the Ordnance,

To the Inspector of Small Arms, Ross Rifle Factory, Quebec.  
Board of Officers Ross rifles.

Inclosed herewith is a copy of the proceedings of a board of officers on Ross rifles held at H. M. Gun Wharf, Halifax, by order of the Officer Commanding Maritime Provinces.

Most of the defects are those of which we are aware, but some further **RATHER STARTLING WEAKNESSES HAVE SHOWN THEMSELVES.**

Will you please be good enough to note them carefully and report progress being made in the line of improving these weaknesses and defects.

(Sgd.) W. H. COTTON, Colonel.

Master General of Ordnance.

This was forwarded to Col. Drury, and in due course Col. Drury commanding the Maritime Provinces reports as follows:

1. That a large proportion of the mechanical defects and the defects in sighting reported would

be remedied by greater care in details of manufacture and in testing for accuracy at the shorter ranges.

2. That the construction of the back-sight and bolt of the rifle require reconsideration with a view to strengthening.

3. That the butt strap should be strengthened.

4. That the foresight should not be white.

5. That the sling should be altered to permit of its being used for steadying the rifle when firing.

I would also suggest for consideration that the magazine should be fitted for clip ammunition which might overcome the present tendency to jam which is to some extent due to the cartridges not lying true when inserted one by one in the magazine.

The report of the proceedings is as follows:

Proceedings of a board of officers assembled at H. M. Gun Wharf, Halifax, N.S., on August 23, 1906, by order of officer commanding fortress of Halifax, N.S., for the purpose of reporting on the defects found in the Ross Rifle, Mark II by units which have lately undergone their annual musketry courses.

President, Lieut.-Colonel R. L. Wadmore, R.C.R.

Members, Major H. C. Thacker, R. C. G. A., Captain P. H. French, R. C. E.

In attendance. Nil.

The board having assembled pursuant to order proceed to record evidence:

First evidence, Lieut. R. B. Willis; R.C.R., states:

I have been acting as musketry instructor to the Royal Canadian Regiment at their musketry training at McNabs. I have been five years and seven months in the Manchester regiment as lieutenant before joining the Royal Canadian Regiment. I was three years assistant adjutant (musketry) in the fourth battalion and am in possession of the Hythe certificate.

On the morning of May 15, 1906, I commenced the instruction of the recruits of four companies of the Royal Canadian Regiment, in table A, and immediately defects were reported as under.

**MECHANICAL** — (a) foresight. In many cases I find the fixing screw comes loose, and in a few cases, when

the screw is firm, the foresight will still be loose.

(b) Lower band—Being riveted, in some cases becomes loose and consequently the hand guard drops off.

(c) BACK SIGHT—The leaf of back sight easily bends to right or left. In two cases the wind gauges broke completely off, in a great many cases when the rifle is fired the back sight jumps 100 to 200 yards.

In a great many cases the projections to BACK SIGHT LEAF which holds it in its place are too short and do not retain their grip so that the leaf flies over on to the hand guard. The gooseneck of the slide in some cases is too high, and one cannot see the foresight in the V of back sight.

THE WIND GAUGE LEAF HAS A TENDENCY to work loose.

BOLT STOP—In a great many cases the projection on the left side of bolt breaks off, this also renders the rifle useless for magazine fire. This frequently happens in opening the bolt.

EXTRACTOR—The hook of the extractor in a few cases has broken off (about 2 per cent.) This renders the rifle useless.

MAIN SPRING STRIKER — In a great many cases the main spring is too weak, the striker leaves an indent on the cartridge but does not explode it.

STRIKER—In a very large number of cases the striker breaks off inside the bolt head.

SAFETY CATCH—In a great many cases the safety catch does not go home, but gives a click leading a man to think it has gone fully home. The consequence is that the rifle goes off when the safety catch is pushed home, and on releasing it again, the rifle sometimes goes off. In one case the safety catch blew right away and were never found.

MAGAZINE—In a few cases the magazine cut-off will not remain down.

BUTT TRAP—The slide is too thin, when arms are ordered and it strikes a stone it gets indented and cannot be opened.

Barrel—In a few cases the barrel can be taken by the hood of foresight and twisted right round until hood is underneath.

PILING SWIVEL—If this gets broken, a new one cannot apparently be put in.

General—Very frequently on ordering arms the bolt slips open.

## SPECIAL DEFECTS ACTIVE SERVICE.

(a) Foresight—Being of white metal militates against accurate and rapid sighting.

(b) Sling—There is no means of slinging the rifle properly, nor is there any chance of steadying the arm for firing by using the sling.

(c) Bayonets—None yet issued for the rifle.

(d) Micrometer thimble—When at zero leaves a space open with three of the threads which the screw works on exposed to sand and dirt, which would choke its efficient action.

(e) BOLT ACTION—The space in rear of the bolt being exposed is easily clogged with dirt or mud, and would quickly render it impossible to fire the rifle by stopping the action of the sear.

(f) General—BETWEEN MAY 15, 1906, AND JULY 1, 1906, FORTY-FIVE RIFLES WERE REPORTED AS DEFECTIVE FROM VARIOUS CAUSES, THAT WAS ABOUT 25 PER CENT. OF THE RIFLES NOW IN USE.

The weakness of the striker spring as above mentioned in miss-fires is a most serious defect on active service."

(Sgd.) R. B. WILLIS, Lieutenant,  
Royal Canadian Regiment.

I propose to read all of these reports because they are most convincing and every one of them is equally as damaging as this. The magazine is useless, the side of the bolt breaks off, the back sight on the rifle jumps when fired from 100 to 200 yards, and the safety catch unsafe. One would think to read these reports that these were rifles picked up on a field of battle and reported on after a severe action. But it is not so. These were rifles shipped direct from the Ross Rifle Company to the regiments, issued to the men from the racks, taken down to the ranges, used carefully and brought back.

Mr. SAM. HUGHES. Are they not inspected before they are sent down?

Mr. WORTHINGTON. My hon. friend ought to know.

Mr. SAM. HUGHES. I say they are inspected.

Mr. WORTHINGTON. Second evidence.—No. 105 Armourer Sergeant Edward Billings, Ordinance Stores Corps, states:

"I WAS A PROFESSIONAL GUN AND RIFLE MANUFACTURER FOR

**EIGHT OR NINE YEARS BEFORE JOINING THE SERVICE.** I joined the Imperial service in 1894 in what was then the Corps of Armourers and I completed 21 years in the Imperial service, in the Armourers section of A.O.D. I have been about six months in the O.S.C. I am attached to R. C. R. for duty as armourer sergeant, and in that capacity have been repairing damages and defects to the Ross rifle Mark II since it was issued to the R.C.R.

**Mechanical.**

(a) **Foresight**—A large number of rifles have been sent in with loose foresights. These have been adjusted by tightening the foresight screw, after this has been done I do not know if they again work loose.

(b) **Lower band**—This is so thin that there is no thickness for a screw thread to be properly made, the consequence is that the screw falls out. In the Mark I Ross rifle, there was a good sound lower band with a sling swivel on it, which in my opinion was much better.

**BACK SIGHT**—The projections to back sight leaf which holds it in its place, are simply riveted in. Both these should be screwed in. When necessary to repair the spring of back sight, one of these pins has to be knocked out, and then knocked in again. This is a faulty system.

The wind gauge in some cases when screwed right over to extreme limit, cannot be screwed back to centre. This is due to the milled head not being properly fixed, it is only driven on to a cylindrical shaft. When screwed right over, the backsight side of the milled head gets burned off and jams.

As regards to backsight jumping, the spring which engages the slide on the other gearing is very faulty and does not act in some cases; it can hardly be called a spring.

**BOLT STOP**—Is made of iron, case hardened. There is not sufficient bearing surface to give the necessary resistance.

**BOLT**—Is of iron, case hardened. The resisting lug frequently breaks off, the metal being extremely brittle just surrounding it.

The bolts should be numbered, with the rifle, in order that the right bolt goes in the right rifle.

**EXTRACTOR**—The hook sometimes breaks off. It is not strong enough.

**MAIN SPRING STRIKER**—This

spring is defective, and misfires are due to the defects. It is not powerful enough, and a certain amount of the force of the spring is lost, due to friction on the channel of the bolt. There should be little or no friction there. The outside diameter of the spring should fit the channel, and the inside diameter should fit the shaft. Owing to fit not being good there is too much side play of the spring.

It is very difficult to take out the spring striker and to replace it.

**STRIKER**—The point frequently breaks.

**SAFETY CATCH**—The milled head for attaching safety catch falls out in some cases. This renders rifle useless. Some of the bolts open when the safety catch is home. The trigger sometimes jams when the safety catch is home and on the catch being released, the rifle fires.

**MAGAZINE**—The bottom plate to magazine drops out in some cases. This cannot in some cases be replaced without using undue force.

**BARREL**—Frequently the barrels have not been fitted properly into the body. The browning is very inferior.

**PILING SWIVEL**—If broken, a new one cannot be put in, in any way whatever.

**BUTT**—Inadequate protection for the butt when arms are ordered.

**MAGAZINE PLATFORM SPRING**—Frequently breaks.

**General**—Interior parts are not oiled when put together. To the best of my recollection, I have repaired defects in at least 150 rifles since May 12, 1906.

(Sgd.) E. Billings.

Sergeant Billings demonstrated each point fully and practically to the satisfaction of the board, using a Ross rifle Mark II, in which a number of damages and defects had been collected from other rifles, for the purpose of demonstration.

**Third evidence**—Capt. M. St. L. Simon, R.C.E., O.C., 1st Fortress Company, R.C.E., states:

My company is armed with the Ross rifle and commenced table B for R.C.E., O. C., 1st Fortress Company, on July 16, 1906, at McNab's Island. During the course, I noticed the following defects in the Ross rifle:

**Mechanical** (a) foresight—is too blunt and band holding foresight is shrunk on, which causes uneven expansion of a heated barrel.



(b) Lower band—Should have a swivel for sling.

(c) BACKSIGHT—Too delicate. Leaf is too flimsy, the micrometer screw has been reported to move on firing and sometimes cannot be moved at all. The slide of backsight sometimes jumps 100 or 200 yards on firing and the V of the backsight is too small. The centre line on leaf is very badly marked in some cases.

At low elevations, the V of backsight is sometimes hidden by the wooden grip.

(d) BOLT STOP—In some cases the bolt stop, when pressed down, remains down.

(e) BOLT—The resisting lug has been found to shear off sometimes.

The striker will go forward with the bolt open one inch.

EXTRACTOR—Sometimes fails to extract and ejector sometimes fails.

MAIN SPRING STRIKER—Misfires were very frequent due to weakness of main spring, or wrong adjustment of striker.

STRIKER—In one or two cases head of striker was broken.

SAFETY CATCH—Sometimes goes apparently home when it is not truly so, giving a false impression and leading a soldier to think that on pulling the trigger the rifle will not go off. On replacing the safety catch to danger position the rifle has been found to go off without pulling the trigger. I consider this a most dangerous defect.

Magazine—The magazine cut off is not easy to work, the feed of magazine is bad.

Barrel—There has been a case of a loose barrel.

CHAMBER—Numerous cases of split cartridges, all split at forward end. This may be due to defective ammunition.

PILING SWIVEL—Has not been used yet.

General—The parts have the appearance of being loosely fitted together. Special defects active service and musketry.

Foresight—Bad color.

Sling—Is too short.

Bayonets—None issued.

BACKSIGHT—Would be easily put out of action by sand and dirt.

BOLT—Would be easily put out of action by sand and dirt.

Sighting—Under 100 yards the sighting is inconsistent.

In one rifle, firing at 200 yards, backsight was at zero, and man was aiming below the bottom of target, and was getting hits. In another, firing at 200 yards, backsight was at 250 yards.

In another, the rifle threw 3 feet to the left at 200 yards. This would appear due to want of adjustment of foresight before issue. At 300 yards, the elevations varied between 80 to 60 yards, and 340 yards the deflection varied from zero to 6 feet in practically still weather; this latter would also appear due to faulty adjustment of foresight before issue.

General remarks — I FOUND 35 RIFLES DEFECTIVE OUT OF 79. I can get the numbers to identify the defects as above noted, if required. The company have not done much parade work with their rifles, but it has been noticed that the bolts open sometimes on ordering arms.

(Sgd.) M. ST. L. Simon, Capt. R.C.E.,  
O. C. 1st Fortress, R.C.E.

Fourth evidence—Capt. A. C. B. Gray, R.C.R., states:

I am in command of No. 1 Company, R. C. R., at present at McNab's Island during musketry table B. My company started on August 1; and defects were reported as follows:

Mechanical.

(a) Foresight.—One rifle bursting at muzzle. This occurred while man was firing standing, at third or fourth round, he had previously fired some 60 to 70 rounds. This may have been due to a stripped bullet, but nothing was found in barrel.

Foresight is very loose, moves about from side to side.

(b) Lower band.—Riveted on. In one case it has come away, causing handguard to come off.

(c) BACKSIGHT.—Sometimes firing at 200 yards, the foresight is obscured by gooseneck of leaf of backsight. In one case the left hand side of ratchet band was loose.

THR WINDGAUGE is frequently very loose. The backsight slide jumps sometimes on rifle being fired.

The leaf of foresight frequently gets out of projections to backsight leaf, and goes right over on to the hand-guard.

BOLT STOP.—Sometimes will go down, and frequently when down will not come up.

BOLT.—The resisting lug, in many

cases, shears right off. This has occurred particularly in rapid fire. Difficult to replace in fire.

**EJECTOR**.—Has sometimes broken

**EJECTOR**.—Has sometimes broken off, and sometimes when not broken, does not eject.

**MAIN SPRING OF STRIKER**.—Misfires were very frequent.

**STRIKER**.—No case of broken heads.

**SAFETY CATCH**.—In many cases the safety catch appears to be home, when it is not so, and the rifle can be fired. When caught is put to danger the rifle goes off. I consider this a most serious defect.

**MAGAZINE**.—The feed is bad, and jams were frequent. The cut off is faulty, and sometimes does not stay down.

**BUTT TRAP**.—Liable to be bent on ordering arms.

**BARREL**.—One case of a loose barrel.

**PILING SWIVEL**.—If broken, a new one cannot be put in.

General.—The trigger guard appears to be very soft metal and bent easily. Active Service and Musketry Defects.

(a) Muzzle or barrel is cut off flush, and the interior is more liable to accidental damage.

(b) Foresight. White sight is objectionable, gives bad definition.

(c) Sling—No use as at present attached.

(d) Bayonets—None issued.

(e) **BACKSIGHT** — Micrometer screw very liable to get choked with dirt.

(f) **BOLT**—Liable to be choked with dirt.

(g) **SIGHTING**—Backsight generally is flimsy and liable to be bent. Little consistency in sighting. In elevation, in one case, firing at 150 yards, the man was at zero, firing low, and made good shooting.

(h) General.—No oil bottles issued. Up to date (27-8-06) I have sent in TWENTY-FOUR DEFECTIVE RIFLES OUT OF ABOUT SEVENTY, but have not yet completed my practices, and have at least two more defective rifles on hand.

(Sgd.) A. C. B. GRAY, Capt.

No. 1 Company, R.C.R.

I know my hon. friend from Victoria and Haliburton (Mr. Sam. Hughes) does not like to listen to this tale of woe. This may appear to him to be the abomination of desolation, but I

wish he would keep quiet while I am reading.

Mr. SAM. HUGHES. Oh, yes, but I want to put some life into this thing; it is very dead.

Mr. WORTHINGTON. Well, you can't put much life into it; it's a dead dog.

Fifth evidence: Captain A. P. R. Nable, R.C.R., states:

I am in command of No. 6 Company, R.C.R., now going through table B at McNab's island. My company is armed with Ross rifle, Mark II. I started table B on August 1, and defects have been reported as under.

Mechanical.

**Foresight**—No complaint.  
**Lower band**—In many cases, worked loose.

**BACKSIGHT**—In one case, leaf bent. The clamp (or slide) of backsight sometimes moves when rifle is fired. The micrometer thimble in many cases moves when rifle is fired.

**BOLT STOP**—In many cases slides down, will not come up, in others will not go down.

**BOLT** — Resisting lug frequently breaks off. Is difficult to replace in rifle. The striker and bolt will go forward on pressing trigger, when bolt is open one inch.

**MAIN SPRING STRIKER** — Very large number of misfires.

**STRIKER**—Frequently broken off.

**SAFETY CATCH**—In very many cases it goes in and appears to be home when it is not so. A man is led to believe that the rifle is safe when it is not so. On pressing the trigger the rifle fires. Also when safety catch is put back to danger the trigger the rifle fires. Also when safety catch is put back to danger the trigger the rifle fires. I had to stop firing from the magazines in field practices, on account of weakness of safety catch. I consider this a most dangerous defect.

**MAGAZINE**—Large number of jams, especially when cartridges are put in hurriedly, as they generally would be. The cut off sometimes does not work. There is not sufficient distinction in position of cut off when open and closed. There should be no doubt whatever on such a point.

**BUTT TRAP**—No complaint so far.

**BARREL**—One loose barrel.

**PILING SWIVEL**.—Was easily bent, preventive arms being piled.

**TRIGGER GUARD**—In one case, a man was skirmishing, his rifle got

knocked on a stone. This bent in the trigger guard, and the trigger could not be used. The trigger guard was not strong enough.

Active Service and Musketry.

Foresight—White color is objectionable, does not give clear definition.

Sling—Cannot be used.

Bayonets—None issued.

BACKSIGHT—Very liable to be broken. Very liable to get out of order from dirt. Generally too flimsy for active service.

SIGHTING—The sighting is inconsistent, the variations in elevation of different rifles at same range being considerable.

General—No oil bottles. Out of my company, firing seventy-eight, I have sent in THIRTY DEFECTIVE RIFLES FROM ONE CAUSE OR ANOTHER; and have not yet completed table B.

The barrel is cut off flush at the muzzle. I consider this renders the interior more liable to damage.

(Sgd.) A. P. B. NAGLE,

Captain R.C.R.

Sixth evidence: Captain E. H. Robinson, A.O.D., (Inspector of Ordnance Machinery) states:

I have noted the following defects in the Ross rifle, Mark II:

Mechanical.

Foresight—Screw of foresight works loose due to the plate being too thin, causing only about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  threads to be doing the work.

Lower band—Not sufficient number of threads in the band to take the threads of male screw.

BACKSIGHT—Hinge pin of back of backsight leaf is too small in my opinion, and also the boss where it passes through should be solid and not hollow as it is. This would add very little to the weight.

MICROMETER SCREW jams occasionally. Windgauge screw jams occasionally.

The projections from slide of backsight which hold leaf down are too short, or the lip of leaf too narrow.

BOLT STOP—Material is too soft. If made of wrought iron it should be case hardened.

BOLT—Resisting lug broken in several cases.

MAIN SPRING OF STRIKER—Is in my opinion weak. It starts compressing at four and a half pounds instead of seven to nine pounds, as it should do.

STRIKER—The striker protrusion varies in all rifles, and no gauge is yet available to correct these. If the strikers were all one protrusion and that the correct one, misfires would not be so frequent.

MAGAZINE LOADING TRAY—Sometimes found to throw to one side more than the other.

BARREL—The .072 inch gauge goes into the chamber and allows the bolt to shut, whereas the .64 inch gauge should only be able to go in and allow the bolt to close home.

One barrel was found to be loose in its attachment to the body.

General remarks—All these defects can in my opinion be overcome. The backsight can be strengthened, the stop to bolt can be made harder still, the broken lugs on bolts appear to be more difficult to overcome, but even this with some alteration in manufacture can be made good.

(Sgd.) E. H. ROBINSON,

Captain I. O. H.

Seventh evidence: Lieutenant R. F. C. Horetzky, R.C.R., No. 2 Company, R.C.R., states:

I was with No. 2 Company, Royal Canadian Regiment, during its musketry training at McNab island, table B. Captain Kaye, who commanded the company is now on leave. I noted the following defects in the Ross rifle, Mark II:

Mechanical.

(a) Foresight—I found the foresight in many rifles loose.

(b) Lower band—This works loose in a few cases.

BACKSIGHT—When the leaf of backsight is up, in numerous cases, it jerks from right to left. When at short ranges, the V of backsight is obscured by wood of hand guard, in some cases.

In firing, sometimes the slide of backsight will alter 100 yards.

The WINDGAUGE SCREW in some cases is very difficult to work.

BOLT STOP—No remarks.

BOLT—Several of the resisting lugs were broken off.

EXTRACTOR—In some cases the extractor would not work.

MAIN SPRING OF STRIKER—During the course there were a number of misfires.

STRIKER—There were about 8 strikers broken out of a strength of 98 men firing.

SAFETY CATCH—Most of the men

were not aware when the safety catch was on, as it would appear to go home without actually doing so. I consider this a very dangerous defect.

**MAGAZINE**—The cut-off is too small and does not always work. There is not sufficient distinction between the two positions.

**BUTT TRAP**—In my opinion is of too thin metal, and would quickly get damaged.

Special defects, active service and musketry.

(a) **FORESIGHT**—The white foresight does not give clear definition. Hood protector spoils shooting.

(b) **Sling**—No swivel on lower band.

(c) **BOLT ACTION**—Liable to be clogged with sand.

(Sgd.) R. F. C. HORETZKY,

Lieutenant, R. C. R.

Eighth evidence: Captain J. D. Doull, R.C.R., states:

I am in command of No. 3 Company, Royal Canadian Regiment, which commenced the musketry training, table B, about June 7. I found certain defects in the Ross rifle Mark II, as under:

**Mechanical.**

(a) **Foresight**—Works loose in many cases. The adjustment of a foresight is a very delicate matter at any time.

(b) **Lower band**—In one case the screw came out.

(c) **BACKSIGHT**—In some cases the gooseneck of leaf of backsight is too high, and covers the aperture in the backsight.

In a number of cases the projection to **BACKSIGHT LEAF WORKS** out and leaf springs right over on to the hand guard.

**THE WINDGAUGE SLIDE** sometimes works loose. The sight is one that takes a great deal of teaching to recruits and is at times very slow to adjust.

**BOLT STOP**—In one case when pressed down it remained down.

**BOLT**—I have seen several cases where the resisting lug had broken off.

**EXTRACTOR**—It failed to work once on account of split cartridge.

**MAIN SPRING OF STRIKER**—A large number of misfires have occurred.

**STRIKER**—One the head flattened and a number were broken.

**SAFETY CATCH**—I consider dan-

gerous. It catches twice as it goes home, a man hears the first catch and imagines it is home. If the trigger is then pressed and safety catch put to danger, the rifle goes off.

**MAGAZINE**—Jams are liable to occur. The loading tray jammed in one case. The cut-off is not sufficiently distinct in its two positions, and it is not easy to tell when it is on or off.

The screws on under side of magazine plate occasionally drop out.

**BUTT TRAP**—Liable to damage from stones.

**BARREL**—The chamber is too large for the cartridge, a very large number of split cartridge cases was observed, which I consider due to too large a chamber.

One case of a loose barrel. This is dangerous.

Special defects, active service and musketry.

**FORESIGHT**—The white sight does not give clear definition. I consider the band objectionable from a shooting point of view.

**Sling**—Cannot be used.

**Bayonets**—Not issued.

**MICROMETER THIMBLE**—Liable to get out of order quickly on service due to sand and dirt.

**BOLT ACTION**—Liable to be clogged with sand or dirt. Hard to be put in quickly.

**LOADING TRAY**—Attachment liable to be easily damaged.

General—No oil bottle. **ABOUT 40 DEFECTIVE RIFLES SENT IN FOR VARIOUS REPAIRS OUT OF 120 IS WERE BEYOND THE WORK OF THE ARMOURER SERGEANT.**

The barrel gets **EXTREMELY HOT VERY RAPIDLY. SIGHTING IS VERY ERRATIC.**

(Sgd.) JOHN D. DOULL,

Captain, R. C. R.

Then I will read the following resume of defects:

**A.—Mechanical defects.**

**FORESIGHT**—1. Works loose in very many cases.

**LOWER BAND**—1. Works loose in many cases; 2. No swivel for sling.

**BACKSIGHT**—1. Leaf. Too flimsy, hinge pin weak. Flies over on to handguard frequently; 2. Windgauge. Works loose or screw jams in many instances; 3. V gets obscured at short ranges frequently; 4. Slide jumps on discharge frequently; 5.

Miscrometer screw. Moves on firing, or jams, in many cases.

**BOLT STOP**—1. Works inefficiently in many cases; 2. Considered weak.

**BOLT**—1. Resisting lug. Breaks off frequently; 2. Extractor. Occasionally fails, and occasionally breaks off; 3. Ejector. Occasionally fails; 4. Main spring of striker and striker. Misfires extremely common. Strikers frequently break.

**SAFETY CATCH**—1. Works inefficiently and is a source of danger.

**MAGAZINE**—Cut off occasionally faulty; 2. Little indication to a soldier, between cut off open, and cut off closed; 3. Feed generally poor and jams frequent; 4. Loading tray occasionally jams; 5. Platform springs occasionally break.

**BARREL**—1. Several cases of loose barrels; 2. Cartridge cases frequently split, chamber considered too great a diameter for .303 ammunition; 3. Muzzles cut off flush exposes interior to accidental damage.

**BUTT TRAP AND BUTT PLATE**—Metal too thin, liable to injury from stones; 2. Inadequate protection to butt of rifle.

**PILING SWIVEL**—1. Renewal very difficult.

(Sgd.) R. Lyndhurst Wadmore, Lt.-Col., President of board.

(Sgd.) H. C. Thacker, Major, R.C.R.

(Sgd.) P. H. French, Captain, R.C.R.

Members.

B.—Special defects active service and musketry.

**FORESIGHT**—1. White foresight gives bad definition.

**SLING**—1. No practical provision for use of sling.

**BAYONETS**—None issued.

**BACKSIGHT**—Liable to be easily choked with dirt.

**SIGHTING GENERALLY**. — Shows want of adjustment before issue.

General remarks.—No oil bottles. Bolts occasionally drop out on ordering arms. Trigger guard of weak material. The bolt is difficult to replace in the rifle.

(Sgd.) R. Lyndhurst Wadmore, Lt.-Col., President of board.

(Sgd.) H. C. Thacker, Major, R.C.A.

(Sgd.) P. H. French, Captain,

Members.

That, Mr. Speaker, concludes the evidence of the board of inquiry on Canada's national arm of defence, held at Halifax in October, 1906.

At six o'clock, House took recess.  
**AFTER RECESS.**

House resumed at eight o'clock.

Mr. WORTHINGTON. When the House rose at six o'clock, Mr. Speaker, I had completed the report of the inquiry into the Ross rifle held at Halifax. From that report it would seem that every one of the witnesses examined concurred in four or five particulars. They were of the opinion that, AS A MAGAZINE GUN, IT WAS DEFICIENT, THAT IN A GREAT MANY INSTANCES IT JAMMED. Every witness said that the back sight jumped when the rifle was fired from 100 to 200 yards. That the bolt lugs frequently broke off and were of improper material. Safety catch was dangerous. These are practically the main points upon which they all agreed. In summing up their evidence, I find that every witness said that out of his particular company there are from 25 per cent. to 35 per cent. or more of the rifles issued damaged during target practice, so that it would seem it is hardly a weapon which the people of this country would care to have put into the hands of their brothers and sons to defend Canada and the empire.

While discussing the experience of the permanent force in handling the rifle in the Maritime Provinces, I would like to read a report from the camp of instruction at Sussex in 1906, page 280 of the Public Accounts Committee report on the Ross rifle:

**SUSSEX CAMP OF INSTRUCTION, 1906.**

Defects reported in certain Ross rifles (Mark I) produced for inspection at the above named camp:

Four rifles—Extractor failed to work.

Two rifles—Went off as bolt was closed.

Nine rifles—Screw head (top of block) broken off.

Four rifles—Loose foresight.

One rifle—Catch for locking bolt failed to engage.

Two rifles—Bolt falls out when rifle is ordered. (Screw top of block) split. Stiff action.

One rifle—Stiff action.

Three rifles—Piling swivel fallen out or broken off.

Then follows a list of the casualties more or less serious, which are as follows:

Cartridge sticks in breach, extractor failed.

Two screws fallen out from trigger guard plate.

Screw (top of block) deficient when used.

Cut-off broken. Striker does not touch cartridge.

Extractor fallen out.

Interrupted screw, head of cocking piece, badly made. The head of cocking piece flew out when firing blanks.

Magazine platform fails to work.

Bolt sometimes jams when pressed home.

Piling swivel deficient. Fails sometimes to extract.

Micrometer thimble jammed.

Defective elevating back sight spring. Stiff bolt action. Protruding striker. Very dangerous.

Cocking piece comes out when drilling. Inferior thread to screw.

Screw deficient from trigger guard plate.

That is a list of the casualties at the Sussex camp, and with each casualty is given the number of the rifle, but I have not thought it necessary to read the numbers. As I said this afternoon, in summing up the weaknesses and general deficiency of the rifle, it was necessary to go from one end of the country to the other to ascertain its defects. We are next billed for St. John, N.B. Here is a report sent in by Beverley R. Armstrong, Major Commanding the 3rd Regiment of Canadian Artillery.

"The rifle practice of the Unit under my command for the annual training in 1906 has not been carried out owing to the fact that the regiment is armed with Mark I Ross rifles, which, in consequence of two accidents to two of these on the 24th May last, when being used by No. 2 company, the officers and men are afraid to use them.

The following is the report on those two accidents. This is from the officer commanding 3rd Regiment Canadian Artillery and the district officer commanding Militia District No. 8:

There have been casualties in the way of explosion of parts of two rifles but no casualties to the men, however, resulted.

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. When did the alleged explosion occur?

Mr. WORTHINGTON. On 24th May.

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. And it

was not reported until the end of December.

Mr. WORTHINGTON. That shows lack of discipline on the part of the militia.

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. It shows that they did not think anything about it until reminded by somebody here.

Mr. WORTHINGTON. It was reported to the district officer commanding on the 3rd December, 1906, in reply to a request for annual rifle practice returns:

That in consequence of two accidents having happened to rifles when in use by No. 2 Company, such practice had not been carried out.

There was an accident on the 24th of May, when the breech block of two rifles exploded, but no men were injured.

In one case the milled thumb pull at end of firing pin burst in at least three pieces, on discharge of the cartridge, and blew in different directions. Two pieces were afterwards picked up. In the other case a cylindrical piece of steel, about three-quarters of an inch long, from in front of the milled thumb pull, flew over the rifleman's shoulder and was picked up in rear. The thumb pull in this case was blown away but not found. This accident is thought to have been caused by premature explosion, due to the fact that the firing pine had worked forward, the closing of the breach causing the firing pin to strike the cartridge before the breach was properly closed. It was only by good fortune that the men handling the rifles, in these cases, were not injured.

The annual rifle practice of the 3rd Regiment Canadian Artillery was not carried out this year because, as stated on December 3, on account of the accidents mentioned, the men would not voluntarily use the rifles, and the officers did not care to take the responsibility of using them to do so.

This practically confirms what was said at the Halifax board—that even when the safety catch is set, the rifle may still go off; so that the soldier who puts down the safety catch is never sure but that his rifle may go off when he least expects it.

Now we will take the report made on the rifles at Quebec, where, on the Plains of Abraham, the component parts of this rifle are assembled and

put together. This report is from Major Fages. I will read only the most important parts of it:

"I may add that a few of the rifles when firing from the magazine (rapid fire) twice of three times out of five shots it will be a misfire.

The musketry is only starting and I have no doubt that by the time it is completed other defects may be found out and a further report will then be sent.

The retaining pin that prevents the back sight from flying forward is also loose and liable to come out at any moment.

The leaf of the backsight is of light material and is easily bent. At this morning's practice there were several misfires and when using the magazine the cartridges jammed in it and did not work properly.

The extractors also in many cases failed to respond. The ten rifles referred to above have been handed to the Master General of the Ordnance for inspection at his request, and should said rifles not be returned to the depot instructions to remove them from our books will be required.

At a board of inquiry held at Quebec, a great many witnesses were examined and gave testimony as to how they considered the rifle worked. None reported favorably on the rifle.

One man, No. 8236, Pte. R. W. Bell reported:

I was firing at the 500 yard range on the 18th instant. After firing several shots, I placed another cartridge in the chamber and fired it, whereupon the bolt blew open, the dust-plate in the bottom of the magazine blew out and the hand-guard blew off. The cartridge knocked around the base.

Then, we come to St. Johns, Que. And I attach a good deal of importance to this report because it was sent in with an accompanying letter from a man who now holds the position of Adjutant General in the minister's department.

Ottawa, January 29, 1907.

From the Officer Commanding the Royal Canadian Dragoons to the Master General of Ordnance.

Sir,—I have the honor to state from reports of the officers commanding "A" and "B" squadrons, Royal Canadian Dragoons, relative to the Ross rifle at present on their charge, it would appear that "A" squadron is

in possession of the Mark II Ross rifle but did not put in its annual musketry practice, 1906, with that rifle for the reason that there is no rifle range at St. Jean, Quebec.

2. The Mark II, Ross rifle was used by "B" squadron at its annual musketry practice and no serious accidents happened during the practice.

3. ABOUT 20 PER CENT. OF THE RIFLES WERE DAMAGED DURING PRACTICE, the following being the principal defects:

a) THE RETAINING LUGS ON THE BOLT ARE VERY WEAK, and a number of them were broken off (about four or five).

(b) THE MAGAZINES WERE USELESS. In almost every case when the magazines were ordered to be used the cartridges jammed at the second shot. There seemed to be a weakness at the platform spring.

(c) THE LEAF OF THE BACKSIGHT IN NEARLY EVERY CASE, HAD TO BE ADJUSTED AFTER EACH SHOT, and seemed to be very easily injured.

I have the honor to be, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

F. L. LESSARD, Brevet Col.

Commanding R.C.D.

Accompanying this report is a long list of defective rifles, in which it is said that "the projections on the left side of the bolt broken off"; "fore-sight and backsight became loose"; "magazine jammed"; "strikers are broken," and a long list of other casualties.

Then, at Eastman, in the province of Quebec, it was found necessary to hold a board to examine into the casualties that occurred there last fall.

It appears that two rifle associations, one from Mansonville and one from Eastman, met to have a friendly shoot and, incidentally, to test the respective merits of the Ross and Enfield rifles. I happened to be in the vicinity at the time, and perhaps know the know the fact as well as anybody else. Seeing a young man about the hotel with his head swathed in bandages, and blood spots oozing through the bandages, I asked what was the matter. His reply was that he had been fool enough to get behind a Ross rifle. He said that during the contest he was selected to shoot with one of the opposite party, Captain Seale, who was using a Ross rifle. The

young man objected to shooting beside it, stating as his reason that on a previous occasion at some match an accident had happened to a Ross rifle while he was shooting with an opponent at the butts. They rather laughed at him and said that his fears were due to the fact that he was a Tory and had nothing good to say for the Ross rifle. So he got down beside his opponent. They were at the 500 yard range. Captain Seale put his cartridge into the chamber and pushed back the bolt. The magazine exploded.

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. Have you the photographs there?

Mr. WORTHINGTON. As the hon. gentleman does not feel inclined to take my word, any more than I would his, I think I had better read the evidence, which is as follows:

Captain Seale states:

I am the captain of the Eastern Civilian Rifle Association, which was formed about a year ago, and is composed of forty-two members. We received ten Ross rifles, Mark I, last fall for use of the members. We had a practice with them almost every Saturday during the summer. We also received a free issue of ammunition about the same time, but as we were out of it on the second October inst., we borrowed two hundred and forty rounds from Mansonville Civilian Rifle Association. It was "cartridges S. A. Ball 303 Cordite, 24-1-05, Mark IV," which we were using as far as I know on 2nd October. On that date we were having a friendly match at Mansonville with this association, 12 men a side. We had all finished firing at the 200 yards range and I was firing at the 500 yards firing point, when my rifle exploded. We were shooting in pairs, and my mate was a Mr. Peabody, of Mansonville. We had each fired three sighters and five shots on our scores when the accident occurred.

I was on my sixth shot. I had pressed the bolt home pretty hard, but can't swear that it locked. I produce the damaged rifle, which is numbered E923, and all the broken parts which I could find in the field near me, some may be missing—I was not aiming and it was just when I pushed the bolt home that the explosion occurred; my fingers were not on the trigger, and my right hand was on the bolt sleeve knob.

Both my hands were numbed by the shock and I could only use the first finger of my right hand. One of the pieces hit Mr. Peabody on the right temple, and must have gone horizontally, as he was lying down as I was. It cut an artery, I think, and Dr. Painting attended him.

There is a part of the cartridge case still in a barrel of the rifle, but I cannot produce the wrapper of the ammunition, because we were not in the habit of keeping them. \* \* \* I always used the same rifle and looked after it in my own house. I also allowed others to shoot out of it, but always cleaned it myself.

In this case the board came to the conclusion that,—

"From the evidence so far adduced it is impossible to arrive at a definite conclusion as to the immediate cause of the accident, and recommend that the broken parts, exhibits and proceedings be sent to experts for their examination and report."

The men composing that board were Lt. A. McMillan, Royal Canadian Dragoons, a man who has seen considerable service; W. L. Carey, Royal Canadian Engineers, a man who holds a prominent position in the Militia Department, so prominent in fact that he has been entrusted with the inspection of the fortress in course of construction at Quebec, and J. S. Dunbar, Lieutenant-Colonel and Deputy Adjutant General for the province of Quebec. I understand that after these broken parts were sent to the Ross Rifle Company, the cause of the explosion was found and that it was stated (although this is hearsay) by the experts of the Ross rifle factory that the trigger had been filed.

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. I do not want to interrupt the hon. gentleman but he knows, he heard Major Pym state in answer to his own question, that that rifle had been tampered with. The rifle was sent to Major Pym, not to the Ross rifle factory. It was sent to the inspector. The inspector was present at the meetings of the board and the hon. gentleman himself asked Major Pym the question in the committee and elicited the information which I have just given.

Mr. SAM. HUGHES. Perhaps he could tell us about it if he chose, about the photograph and all that sort of thing.

Mr. WORTHINGTON. The hon.



member for Victoria and Haliburton (Mr. Sam. Hughes) is very much worried about my advocacy of the Lee-Enfield rifle. I do not know whether it is because the commercial instinct is so strong in him that the hon. gentleman thinks I have some interest in the Lee-Enfield.

Mr. SAM. HUGHES. Hear, hear.

Mr. WORTHINGTON. I may tell the hon. gentleman that I am doing this because this is my native land.

Some hon. MEMBERS. Oh, oh.

Mr. WORTHINGTON. Possibly he does not understand that.

Mr. SAM. HUGHES. No, I know nothing about it.

Mr. WORTHINGTON. I would not if I were you. As to the statement of the minister, I have no objection to telling him that Major Pym was present at the board of inquiry. He did not state that the rifle had been tampered with, did he?

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. No, but in answer to a question put by the hon. member in the Public Accounts Committee he did.

Mr. WORTHINGTON. I do not remember that.

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. It is not convenient.

Mr. WORTHINGTON. Major Pym was present at this inquiry. This tale of woe seems to excite the minister and my hon. friend.

Mr. SAM. HUGHES. No, it amuses us.

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. It is a mis-statement.

Mr. WORTHINGTON. I am going to read a report now from no less a man than the Brigadier General who commands the forces in Canada today. I presume that both my hon. friends have some respect for the opinion of this officer. In sending in a report of a board of inquiry he addresses the secretary of the Militia Council and in reference to a rifle on which he was specifically reporting, he states:

1. I found in each instance that the retaining lug upon the bolt had been broken off, so that in the action of extracting the empty shell the bolt would come out.

2. It was impossible to tell whether the break was wilful or accidental, nor was I able to tell whether the break was caused by a flaw in the metal or not, owing to the time that had elapsed between the break and my exami-

ation.

3. UPON RETURNING TO THE ARMOURER'S SHOP, I TRIED SIX OF THESE RIFLES, USING NO UNNECESSARY FORCE IN EXTRACTING; TWO OF THE RETAINING LUGS CAME OFF. An immediate examination of the break showed that there was a flaw in the metal at the butt of the lug. I did not try any more of the rifles.

4. I compared the retaining lug of the Mark I rifle with the lug of the Mark II rifle, and find the lug on the former to be over half an inch in length, while the latter is 1-4 inch in length.

5. I have not known a Mark I retaining lug to break as the Mark II has done. In order to more closely describe the part affected, I am today forwarding by express the bolts of the rifles complained of, viz., Nos. 123, 130, 372 and 378.

I have the honor to be, Sir,

Your obedient servant, in

(Sgd.) W. D. OTTER,

Brigadier-General.

He incloses with his report a resume of the list of casualties, which is as follows:

STATEMENT OF ISSUE AND CONDITION OF THE ROSS RIFLE.

To Whom Issued.	Date of Issue	Number of Rifles Issued	Defective Rifles	Accident to Rifles	Proportion of defects to number issued	No. of page on file
R.C.E.....	April.....	144	34	.....	13.2	129
	May.....	20				
	June.....	33				
	July.....	40				
Corps of Guides.....	July.....	5	1	.....	1/5	127
	L.R.C.R.....	May.....	114	4	1	3.4
3 R.C.R.....	June.....	140	1	1	0.7	53
5 R.C.R.....	April.....	800	31	.....	3.8	19-40-44-118
9th R.C.R. }	June.....	85	48	1	42.0	4-31-105-
	Sep'mber	29				
R.C.R.....	June.....	180	6	.....	2.8	11
	July.....	30				
R.C.M.R.....	June.....	130	5	.....	4.1	2-17
R.N.W.M.P.....	Nil.....	Nil	33	.....	.....	23-24-25-26-14-15-16-17-18-19-20

## MUSKETRY SCHOOL OF HYTHE.

About this time the following correspondence occurred with the War Office:—

17 Victoria Street, London S.W.  
12th October, 1906.

Sir:—

With reference to the letter from your Department dated 26th April last, No. 478-4, respecting the supply of samples of Ross Rifles to the War Office, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith, for your information, a copy of a letter (dated 29th ultimo) which has reached me from that Department on the subject, together with a copy of the Report by the Chief Superintendent of Ordnance Factories, Royal Arsenal, Woolwich, referred to therein.

I have the honour to be Sir,

Your obedient servant,

(Sgd) STRATHCONA.

High Commissioner.

The Honourable,

The Minister of Militia and Defence,  
Ottawa, Canada.

Remarks by C. S. O. F., Royal Arsenal, Woolwich, on the construction of the Ross Rifle, 21st July, 1906.

1. The bolt and body are strongly constructed and serviceable.
2. The lock bolt in this rifle is defective, inasmuch that it does not withdraw the cocking from the gear sufficiently.
3. As the primary extraction depends upon the momentum obtained in the first movement of the bolt, the extractor appears to be somewhat weak, being made of sheet material.
4. The magazine is poorly constructed, made of this sheet steel depending on the wood work mainly for its support. The cut off is simple and cheap but unsatisfactory.
5. The construction of the back-sight is decidedly weak, the leaf being made of thin sheet metal pressed up to form a rib in imitation of Mauser's can slot cut out from the solid. The strength of the lugs for the leaf is very poor. The slide is poorly fitted throughout and the main object in this sight appears to have been cheapness of construction.

6. The nose cap is weak in construction but one that could be cheaply made.

7. The sliding trap in the butt plate is not likely to be very durable, as any blow on the plate would fix it.

8. The stocking of the action is very rough and the fitting poor.

There are two more reports from London, where boards were held, and which show very much the same defects and deficiencies as were found in the other rifles which were issued to the other companies of the Royal Canadian Regiment. Lt.-Col. J. Vance Graveley, in one of his reports, says:

TWENTY-THREE WERE MORE OR LESS DAMAGED, many of the complaints being that the rifles were oversighted and that they missed fire. It was impossible to test these faults.

About this time the acting Deputy Minister of Militia and Defence, Mr. E. F. Jarvis, wrote to the Ross Rifle Company a confidential letter, as follows:

Ottawa, July 18, 1906.

Confidential.

Gentlemen,—I am desired by the Minister of Militia and Defence to forward for your information the inclosed lists of defects which have been found to exist in rifles, both Mark I and II patterns, manufactured by your company.

Without attaching undue importance to these lists, it will be seen that they afford sufficient grounds for the conclusion that serious defects have developed in both patterns of the Ross rifle, while in the hands of the troops indicating in one form or another defective workmanship in its manufacture, and possibly also, insufficient inspection before the rifles are accepted by the Militia Department.

This being the case, the minister directs me to give your company immediate notice of these reports, as it is clearly necessary that some radical change must be introduced in the system of inspection, both during manufacture and by the inspection staff before the rifles are taken over by the department."

Mr. Jarvis seems to have struck the nail on the head when he said that:

"Some radical change must be introduced in the system of inspection, both during manufacture, and by the inspection staff before the rifles are taken over by the department."

Within a week, or within a day or two, I asked the minister about this inspection, and his answer across the floor of the House was that the component parts of the rifle were inspected, and that then an inspection was held of the assembled parts, that is an Upright Inspection. Whatever the inspection is, or however it is carried out, certainly it must be defective, because it is hardly credible that anybody would accept these rifles unless they were reported as being thoroughly satisfactory and as having passed a creditable inspection. The minister incidentally told us also that this inspection costs something like \$1.90 per rifle, which, any one will see, adds \$1.90 to the cost of each rifle, making the price \$26.90, to say nothing of the other charges, which, when added, bring the price of the rifle up to the vicinity of \$30. Now, I think enough has been said regarding the unsoundness of the rifle and of the fact that it is an unsafe rifle. As the rifle is not in use on the ranges of this country, either in the Provincial or Dominion matches, or in the matches at Bisley, it might be well to inquire why the marksmen of this country have not taken kindly to it.

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. That is not quite correct. The rifle is in use on this range now, and on all the principal ranges.

Mr. WORTHINGTON. It may be in use every day now, but not during matches.

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. It has been.

Mr. SAM HUGHES. It happened to win the first prize last year at Toronto.

Mr. WORTHINGTON. The hon. gentleman gave us an exhibition of what he could do with it last year at Rockcliffe at 500 yards, he did not hit the target with 8 shots.

Mr. FOSTER. The target was not big enough.

Mr. WORTHINGTON. I may say that it was a 9-foot target.

Mr. SAM HUGHES. The hon. gentleman is just as fair in that as he is in everything else. He is absolutely unfair, he does not know how to be

fair, but we will teach him when our time comes.

Mr. WORTHINGTON. Some members of the Bisley team have won such honour and distinction in these competitions that their names have come to be household words with the militia, and perhaps one whose name is as well known as any other is Sergeant Hayhurst, of Hamilton. Sergeant Hayhurst has made a report upon this rifle. I consider him a most competent person and one able to report from an impartial standpoint, because he has received many favours from the Militia Department of this Government. His statement is as follows:

Hamilton, December 20, 1907.

Lieutenant Colonel E. E. W. Moore,  
Commanding 13th Regiment Infantry  
Hamilton, Ontario.

Sir,—In reply to your communication asking for a report on the improved Ross rifle issued to me during the summer, I have the honour to say that:

Shooting—I have given the rifle a fair test under favourable conditions making the following scores:

July 20—

200—4 4 3 5 5 4 5—30

500—3 2 3 4 4 4 5—25

600—5 5 4 5 5 5 5—34

—99

July 26—

200—3 4 3 4 5 4 3—26

500—3 3 4 5 5 3 4—27

600—4 3 3 5 5 2 5—27

—80

August 2—

200—4 4 4 4 5 4 5—30

500—5 4 5 3 5 2 4—28

600—5 4 4 5 2 5 3—28

—86

August 15—

800—4 4 4 4 3 5 5 0 5 3—35

900—3 0 2 5 3 2 2 3 2 4—26

1,000—3 5 5 3 3 0 3 5 2 2—31

—95

Giving an average of 85 at the shorter ranges and of 95 at the longer compared with 93 and 124 respectively in all my shoots this year with the Lee-Enfield.

You will notice in all my scores with the Ross some very wide shots, more particularly at the longer ranges. I also used the improved Ross in practice for one week at Bisley in 1906 and had a similar experience.

Sights—The above wide difference of results I place by far the greater part to the imperfect state of the rear

sight, which is much too weak in its parts to stand the strain of even careful usage, and any service rifle must necessarily be subjected to a certain amount of strain.

The sight consists of too many working parts all of which must have some play, the aggregate of which make a serious disturbance of aim.

I consider the worst features of this sight, the range locking plate with its square recesses instead of V-shaped, and the light sheet metal leaf. Of the foresight I do not look upon the hood as of any advantage except to protect the barley corn;—the possibility of adjustment is a decided advantage as a true shooting rifle is most necessary to the soldier.

Given a rigid sight bed and firm strong removable leaf, of which there are several excellent examples of Canadian make, and I mention three in the order in which I consider they come, from a mechanical as well as a rifleman's view. The Reardon, Mitchell and Sutherland. With any of these sights the shooting and serviceable qualities of the rifle would be much improved.

Barrel—Of the barrel there is not much to say, if greater care were taken in selection of material and workmanship in rifling, as it is an almost exact copy of a well proved barrel which has given splendid results. Extreme accuracy in long range target shooting has been somewhat sacrificed for less weight and shorter length but does not materially detract from its usefulness as a general service rifle barrel.

Breech mechanism—Of this there are many excellent features, particularly the head locking, with its strong durable lugs, preventing any lift of the bolt at the discharge and less liability of wear. Also the straight pull. There is a weakness in some of the smaller parts as instanced by the breaking of the shell ejector at the first shot. I fired from rifle No. 69. The long drag pull can and should be eliminated.

As to the magazine there is no question but that it would be much improved by the introduction of the clip feed in place of the hand feed. I found after careful practice that more cartridges go on the ground than into the magazine, and this would be much worse under the excitement of even rapid fire, not to speak of action.

STOCK.—There is much that could be

improved in this feature particularly the fitting selection of material and strength.

Of the many rifles I have examined the fitting was very bad, and the wood was frequently crossgrained and spongy where it should have been straight and sound especially at the small of the butt, a weak point.

In CONCLUSION I WOULD SAY THAT WITH ALL OF THE BAD FAULTS AND MANY OF THE WEAK FEATURES REMOVED AND STRONG DURABLE PARTS INTRODUCED IN THEIR PLACE A VERY FINE SERVICEABLE RIFLE WOULD RESULT, BUT WHICH FOR A FINE ACCURATE TARGET SHOOTING RIFLE WOULD STILL BE INFERIOR TO THE PRESENT LEE-ENFIELD BARREL WITH GOOD SIGHTS AND AMMUNITION.

I remain, Sir,

Yours obediently,

(Sgd.) F. H. HAYHURST,

Sergt. Instr. Musk., 13th Regiment.

That is signed F. H. Hayhurst, sergeant instructor of musketry, 13th regiment. You will notice that he says that with all of the bad faults and many of the weak features removed and strong durable parts introduced in their place a serviceable rifle would result. Quite possible! I shall now read the following report from Major M. S. Mercer, second regiment Q. O. R., president of rifle club to Colonel H. M. Pellatt, commanding the same regiment:

Headquarters, Toronto,

January, 10, 1908.

From Major M. S. Mercer, 2nd Regt.,

Q.O.R., President of Rifle Club,

To. H. M. Pellatt,

Commanding same Regiment.

Sir,—I have the honour to report as follows on the Ross rifle issued in 1907, to the 2nd Regiment for test purposes, being Nos. 37, 62, 72 and 80, 1906.

The rifle is of the Mark II. pattern.

The woodwork is still rough and unfinished, badly fitted and permits too much dampness remaining underneath the barrel.

The toe is too long.

The magazine will occasionally jam.

The backsight is useless for service purposes, the 'V' is too shallow and the elevated sight too liable to injury. I used this rifle in wet weather, thoroughly cleaned all parts, but

after leaving it standing for fifteen hours, the sight was unworkable, and required several hours work to restore it to its original condition.

The bands are entirely too light.

The bolt arm is too long, results in skirmishing is that the least touch of arm releases bolt from position and shot is lost. The discharge returns the bolt to the proper position but force of spring is so diminished that cartridge is not discharged. To further test this feature I used rifle in hunting and lost several shots through bolt arm being slightly released by coming in contact with twigs and light underbrush. The bolt action is eminently superior to that of Mark I. rifle, which should never be permitted to be used as it is dangerously defective.

The shooting qualities of the rifle I found fairly good, from 100 to 500 yards for five or six shots. When barrel became heated, shots were wild and uncertain. At longer ranges, results were more satisfactory. I attribute this somewhat to the lightness of the bands, and also to the lightness of the barrel. I have tested a number of Mark II. rifles with like results in this respect. This rifle has not the merit that would justify me in recommending it for sharpshooters or to expert rifle men for match purposes.

In many respects like the Ross Rifle. It is light, simple, has a good foresight, well hooded; is easily cleaned and easy of adjustment, but many improvements are yet required before it can be said to answer the requirements of a national service weapon.

**TROOPS ARMED WITH THIS RIFLE IN ITS PRESENT CONDITION WOULD BE AT A TERRIBLE DISADVANTAGE AGAINST FORCES EQUIPPED WITH OTHER WELL KNOWN NATIONAL ARMS.**

If permission were given to apply the test of 'rough usage' even to the destruction of one of these rifles, with a view to ascertain inherent defects, if any, I would be pleased to continue my investigation, as I believe this test necessary to any complete judgment of the merits of the rifle.

I have the honour to be, sir,

Your obedient servant,  
(Sgd.) M. S. MERCER, major  
President Q.O.R., R.C.

The following report which I shall read was sent in by a man who pos-

sibly knows the Ross rifle as well as anybody who has been connected with it since it was brought to the attention of the public. This report is from Major E. Helmer who at one time held a responsible position on the commission which reported on the rifle and this his report to the Chief Staff Officer at Petawawa:

Petawawa, August 14, 1907.

To C.S.O., Petawawa.

Sir,—I have the honour to report that in accordance with instructions contained in H. Q. 314-15-28, the necessary arrangements were made to carry out the tests of the Ross rifle requested by the M.G.C., and beg to submit the following:

The men selected to carry out these tests are experienced instructors, excellent rifle shots, and altogether reliable. The rifles used bear the 'S' inspection mark (as well as one Mark III) and had not been previously issued to any corps. The tests carried out, together with results, are as follows:

1. Accuracy.—One sighting shot and seven rounds were fired at each of the following ranges: 100, 200, 500, 600 yards, and while there were cases of over and undersighting the rifles tested were found for all practical purposes to be accurately sighted.

2. MAGAZINE FIRE.—The magazines were used for one minute rapid fire at 100 yards. There were a number of jams due to two cartridges lying side by side in which cases the cartridges had to be released from the top, the lifter finger piece being of no assistance. Bad extraction and ejection caused jams in other cases preventing a reasonable number of rounds being fired.

In connection with the above there was no attempt made to fire a large number of rounds as each shot was carefully aimed so that 'troubles' were not due to undue haste on the part of the firers.

3. HANDLING OF SIGHTS WHEN RIFLE IS NOT.—Magazines were charged at 350 yards and 5 rounds fired. The squad was advanced 50 yards at a time, firing 5 rounds from the magazine at each halt, adjusting the sights to suit the distance. At the fourth halt the men complained so much about the heated sights that the firing was stopped although it had been intended to advance to 100 yards as per instructions. The shots were deliberately aimed as the appended de-

tail of hits will show. Both the finger clamps and micrometer rings were so hot as to be unbearable even to hardened fingers. Some of the 'rings' were 'bound' so tightly that they could not be turned at all.

(This applies also to Mark III sight as well. See report S. M. Duncan herewith.)

4. The O. C. cavalry was requested to test the buckets supplied and to report on the suitability of the rifle for mounted units.

Appended hereto will be found reports and details of the shooting as well as the impressions of the different men engaged in carrying out these tests.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

(Sgd.) R. A. HELMER, Major,  
D. A. G. M."

The last report I have to read, although really it was the first report that came in, is from the Royal Northwest Mounted Police. It contains a list of casualties similar to the other reports therein it was stated by Major Perry who was in charge of the force that the rifle practice had to be discontinued for fear of accidents owing to the dangerous nature of the rifle. At the present time we find that the Royal Northwest Mounted police force which is under the charge of the Rt. Hon. the Prime Minister is armed with rifles of any old pattern or vintage dating back to the Winchester 1876, Lee-Enfield, Lee-Netford and Martinis. All these rifles have no component parts interchangeable and all take different brands of ammunition. This is a very deplorable condition of affairs. We find that during the practice with the Ross rifle in one instance the bolt flew back and resulted in an accident by which Sergeant Major Browbridge almost lost his eye. This report is sent in by Assistant Commissioner McIlree to Commissioner Perry. The reference to it is as follows:

"I got a telegram yesterday evening that Bowbridge's eye injured, bolt of rifle flying back at target practice."

Mr. Speaker, any one criticising this rifle in this House is subject to the imputation that he is disloyal and unpatriotic, and that he is prejudicing the minds of the militia. I do not know, Mr. Speaker, if you are a militiaman probably all of us at some time of other have borne arms for our

country; would like to ask you whether you consider a discussion of the defects of this rifle to be prejudicing the minds of the militia? Would you rather have your mind prejudiced by a fair discussion of the merits of the rifle or would you prefer an ocular demonstration of defects similar to that given Sergt. Maj. Bowbridge of the Northwest Mounted Police? I do not think we have to look very far to see why, when these reports came in from the Northwest Mounted Police, a halt was not called and the rifle improved or perfected. This body of men is under the direct charge of the Right Hon gentleman who leads this House, and has been under his charge for a number of years. Report after report of a damaging nature reached his department, so that the right hon. gentleman has not even the excuse of being asleep at the switch. He knew from the first, that the rifle was bad, and yet we do not find him giving the benefit of the doubt to the man behind the gun, the men directly under his control, the riders of the plains who have preserved order in the west since the inception of the provinces, who have served their country with distinction at home and abroad; no, he gave the benefit of the doubt to his war minister's Kitle manure gun which is warranted to do business at both ends simultaneously. The benefit of the doubt had to go to the gun with the straight pull, and at a very serious time. We heard some nights ago of the unerring instinct which guided the right hon. gentleman in settling the affairs of his party and of the country; but this unerring instinct does not seem to have prompted him to give the benefit of doubt to the man behind the gun. For the right hon. gentleman, the other night, according to "Hansard," said this—I hope he will excuse me if I do not read all the speech:

Yes, I see signs of war—

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. This is out of order.

Mr. WORTHINGTON. If Canadians went into action with a gun such as the hon. gentleman who controls the Militia Department sees fit to put into the hands of the militia of this country, I am afraid the result would be worse than another catastrophe which the right hon. gentleman mentioned in a discussion in connection with the Immigration Bill

when he spoke of the angel of death visiting the first-born throughout Israel. I would like to tell the right hon. gentleman, and I tell him frankly, that I think his angel of death is but a kindergarten angel of death in comparison with the angel of death which he has put into the hands of his war minister. (My hon. friend from Victoria and Haliburton Mr. Sam. Hughes, of glorious and immortal memory, seems to be distressed more or less.) About the time the discussion was going on in the 'Star' and other papers regarding the importation of parts of the Ross rifle from the United States, an article appeared in the 'Herald' saying that the Norwegian army was about to be armed with the Ross rifle: but a cable despatch received by the 'Star' shortly afterwards admitted that the commander-in-chief of the Norwegian army did not contemplate re-arming the Norwegian army, and had not even heard of the Ross rifle. Now, these reports of a very unflattering and uncomplimentary nature have been coming in in one continuous stream, to the Militia Department. So it has been found necessary to do something to brush up this gun; and working on the assumption that what cannot be cured must be endured, a whitewash board was held at Quebec and number of friends hied down to the ancient capital, where, on the historic battlefield and under the guns of the fleet, they proceeded to subject this rifle to some most serious tests. One was in regard to disassembling and putting together the component parts of the rifle. In this engagement a Tommy was taken from the citadel and an expert from the Ross rifle factory, and the test went on, and it naturally resulted in the component parts of the Ross rifle being reassembled in a few seconds quicker than the component parts of the Lee-Enfield.

Mr. SAM. HUGHES. The hon member is such a fair-minded gentleman that I am sure he would not like to deceive or mislead the House in any way; but he should know that the sergeant who took down the parts was the most experienced army sergeant in the Dominion of Canada.

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. Hear, hear; that is correct.

Mr. FOSTER. Did he put them back again?

Mr. SAM. HUGHES. No, he could not get it together at all.

Mr. WORTHINGTON. However, that test is of little moment, because nobody is allowed to take apart the army rifles it is forbidden in the instructions of the hon. gentleman who controls the department. Militia order 98 says:

"All tampering with small arms or the stripping or removing of any part of the arm (not intended to be used in the ordinary use of the weapon) is strictly prohibited unless carried out by the district armourer or by a regimental armourer who has been through a course of instruction, at an ordnance depot, and who has received a certificate that he is capable of executing minor repairs."

You can see very readily that was a very unfair test.

This is practically the history of the Ross rifle. Canada's national arm of defence, the rifle which passed such creditable examination at the hands of Canadian musketry experts and with which the minister intends arming the defenders of this country—a rifle which when placed in the hands of the Royal Northwest Mounted Police, was discarded by them because they considered it dangerous and were forced, by reason of that danger to do so a rifle which has been more or less a failure when placed in the hands of the permanent corps and the militia; a rifle which resulted in several serious accidents at St. John, Lethbridge and Eastman; a rifle which is not used by the sharpshooters of this country for the simple reason that they cannot make good scores with it and prefer the old Lee-Enfield. But the manufacture nevertheless goes on just the same.

The minister tells us that no government ever perfects its first rifle, that it must run through successive stages of development from the cradle to maturity. Well, I hope my hon. friend is not going to assume the parentage of a dozen or so brands or vintages of Ross rifles. I would recommend that he be guided more by a little incident which occurred in the history of a young curate who had a sanguine temperament and high ideals. He christened his first little arrival "Alpha," and his second, "Omega," but, alas, for the judgment of the reverend gentleman he was obliged at the expiration of some time

to call his little Mark III. 'Errata.' I would suggest that the right hon. gentleman instead of calling his last rifle 'Mark III.' should call it 'Mark Time,' and then get down to business and perfect a rifle that could be a credit to himself and the country and which could be safely placed in the hands of our militia.

But, according to reports which we hear from time to time possibly all our difficulties in the way of the Ross rifle will be brushed away. A peace at any price park is to be established on the historic Plains of Abraham. It is rumoured that possibly this will entail the removal of the Ross rifle factory, which now defaces the ancient battlefield and stands there as a tribute to the monumental egotism of the right hon. gentleman and his War Minister. Those gentlemen who knew more about rifles than the officers of the Musketry School at Hythe or the commission which reported on the Ross rifle at Springfield or the officers of the permanent force who sent reports from all points from Halifax to Vancouver, and who persist in the idea of placing this rifle in the hands of the militia of Canada. It does not seem that the people of Canada wish to have their militia armed with a rifle such as the one I have described tonight. It is not safe, it is unserviceable, and it comes to grief on the slightest provocation. The reports are unanimous in condemning it

and almost every component part of it. However, there is one thing on which we may congratulate ourselves, and that is that the only Canadian product of the Ross rifle factory, namely, the noise the rifle makes when it goes off, has been omitted from this category of defects, so that we have at least one feature which we may be proud of. I have nothing more to say in connection with the reports as to the efficiency and desirability of the rifle. I trust that the right hon. gentleman and his Minister of War will see fit to reconsider their determination to place this rifle in the hands of the militia. It will be a very serious thing to send troops into action, or even to keep them during peace, armed with a rifle which is not absolutely the best that can be obtained in the world's markets to-day. I beg, therefore, to move:

That all the words after the word 'that' in the proposed motion be left out, and the following substituted instead thereof:

The dealings of the Department of Militia and Defence in connection with the adoption and manufacture of the Ross rifle as an arm for the defence of Canada have displayed deplorable inefficiency, have been characterized by gross extravagance and improvidence, and have impaired public confidence both in the alleged efficiency of the rifle and in the management of the department.

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## RESUMÉ

From the foregoing it will be seen:—

1. That the Ross Rifle is not a Canadian product, but that many of the component parts are manufactured in the United States and merely assembled at the Ross Rifle Factory at Quebec.
2. That in the event of war we would be unable to import these parts and the Ross Rifle Factory at Quebec would be as the "Boston Herald" states "as useless as a cheese factory.
3. That the Ross Rifle Company has the Government for its bankers, receiving as it does on working estimates an advance of 75 pc. the selling price of the Rifle, years before delivery.
4. That the 75 pc. advance on working estimates alone, which amounts to \$18.75 is considerably more than the total cost of the Lee-Enfield, the British Service rifle or the new Springfield the American Services Rifle.
5. That the Government could have purchased the Lee-Enfield, British Service Rifle, Greenier made with bayonets complete for about the same price as the advance estimate on the Ross Rifle without bayonet.
6. That during the years the Ross Rifle has been in course of manufacture no bayonet was adopted for it—but during the past few months a contract has been given to the Ross Rifle Company for over 50,000 bayonets—at \$5.25 a piece—the Lee Enfield with bayonet complete costing less than \$20.00 a difference per Rifle and bayonet or over \$10.00
6. The only other business concern invited to tender for the bayonets being the Ottawa Car Company whose tender was refused. The tender was awarded the Ross Co'y on the same ridiculous terms as that for Rifles, viz :75 p.c. advance on working estimates etc—and so many a year.
7. That we are thus getting a high priced, unservicable, foreign rifle for our Canadian Militia.
8. That no positive estimate of the actual cost of the Rifle can yet be arrived at as by the contract all changes are chargeable to Government, and nearly one hundred changes, as to sights etc have taken place to date.
9. That the Rifle differs entirely in mechanism and as to interchangability of parts with all other Rifles throughout the

Empire, which would be a serious drawback in case of united warfare, (as in South Africa).

10. That nobody doubts the advisability of manufacturing our own Rifles in Canada, provided we can do so as well and at the same, (or even extra cost), as in England, but no one can defend a policy of spending hundreds of thousands of dollars on experiments with a newly designed, untried rifle especially when British small arms manufacturers could readily have been induced to manufacture British Service Rifles in this country.
11. That we would thus have had a Rifle which proved eminently satisfactory in India and South Africa and would have been spared this costly experience.
12. That before 52,000 of these rifles had been completed, and an additional order issued for 10,000 more a few rifles should have been thoroughly perfected and inspected by competent experts and the country saved the cost of changes, etc.
13. That no intelligent or efficient inspection of this Rifle was made previous to delivery or acceptance, either "upright inspection" or as to "interchangability of parts."
14. That the Ross Rifle was most unfavorably criticised both at The Musketry School at Hythe, England. And also at the Woolwich Arsenal.
15. That the rifle has been pronounced useless as a magazine rifle by Officers of the Headquarters Staff and by Boards of Inquiry from Halifax to Vancouver.
16. That it was condemned by the Royal North West Mounted Police, the first corps to use it, and withdrawn ; that force is now armed with rifles of many vintages
17. That many defects and accidents have occurred of a most serious nature which are casually treated by the Minister of Militia as of no importance.
18. That the Rifle is not in use in competitive matches either at International Dominion or Provincial Rifle meets. The Canadian team at Bisley this year using the Lee-Enfield.
19. That up to within a few weeks less than 10,000 of the 52,000 rifles purchased had been placed in the hands of the troops, so that no positive evidence of the stability of the rifle could be obtained.

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