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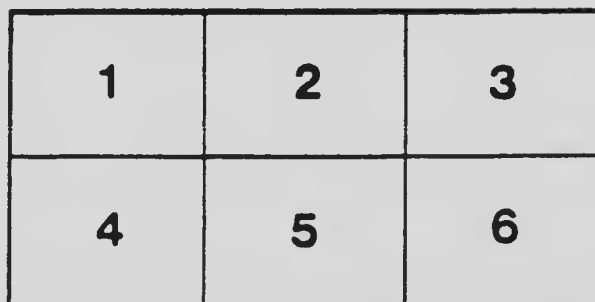
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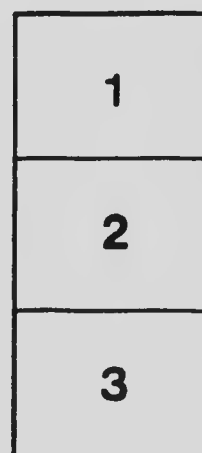
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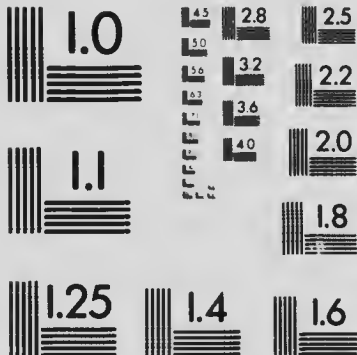
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DISMISSAL OF LORD DUNDONALD.

SPEECH

IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

BY

HON. SYDNEY FISHER

23RD JULY, 1904.

On 23rd July, when the Finance Minister moved the House into Committee of Supply, Mr. R. L. Borden, leader of the Opposition, moved in amendment :

That all the words after the word "that" in the proposed motion be left out and the following substituted therefor :—

The selection and appointment of officers in the militia should be made without regard to party political considerations which if permitted to exercise an influence will prove disastrous to the efficiency of the force.

That while the Minister of Militia is charged with and responsible for the administration of militia affairs the General Officer Commanding is by law charged under the orders of His Majesty with the military command and discipline of the militia and with the duty of recommending to the Minister of Militia fit and proper persons for appointment to commissions therein.

That the conduct of the Honourable Sydney Fisher, Minister of Agriculture, in interfering with the commanding officer of the Thirteenth Scottish Light Dra-

goons while that officer was engaged in the duty of selecting his subordinate officers for the approval of and for recommendation by the General Officer Commanding; and the action of that minister in interposing party political influence between the General Officer Commanding and his officers and in requiring recommendations and appointments to be made or disallowed from party considerations, deserves and should receive the censure of this House.

The House regrets that this unwarrantable interference has been approved by the Government, and that it not only has unduly delayed the organization of the regiment, but has culminated in depriving the militia of Canada of an experienced and distinguished commanding officer.

In reply to Mr. Borden, the following speech was made by the Honourable Minister of Agriculture :—

HONOURABLE SYDNEY FISHER'S SPEECH.

Hon. SYDNEY FISHER (Minister of Agriculture). Mr. Speaker, in view of the resolution which has been moved by the leader of the Opposition (Mr. R. L. Borden), in view, more especially, of the tone of many of the remarks he has addressed to the House, I believe it to be not only my duty, but my right, to take it upon myself to make a reply. I am glad of the opportunity of exercising that right, because I BELIEVE IN WHAT I HAVE DONE IN REGARD TO THIS MATTER I HAVE NOT ONLY BEEN EXERCISING THE RIGHT OF A CITIZEN OF CANADA, THE RIGHT OF A MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT, THE RIGHT OF A MINISTER OF THE CROWN, BUT THAT I HAVE BEEN PERFORMING A DUTY WHICH HAS BEEN LAID UPON ME AS A PUBLIC MAN ON BEHALF OF THE MILITIA OF CANADA. Valuing that right, impressed by that duty, I come to the consideration of the question with a clear conscience; and I only ask that this House and the country shall judge me upon the merits of the case and upon the defence which I make to the accusation.

A few minutes ago the leader of the Opposition read extracts from certain letters, attributing to those extracts certain meanings which he said were the only meanings he could read into the words. I venture to say that another meaning is easily to

be found in them, a meaning more in consonance with the dignity of this House, and more in consonance with the dignity of the leader of a great party than the disingenuous quibbling indulged in by the leader of the Opposition, which was more worthy of a pettifogging lawyer than of the leader of a great party.

Some hon. MEMBERS. Oh, oh.

Some hon. MEMBERS. Order.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER. I hope the House will maintain order.

Mr. FISHER. Sir, I will go into some of these details before I sit down, I will deal with some of the remarks which were made by the hon. leader of the Opposition with regard to these letters; and I will show what, I think, will appeal to any person who studies the correspondence with unprejudiced mind, that the interpretation put upon the letters by the leader of the Opposition is not the fair or true one.

THE RESOLUTION AND THE CORRESPONDENCE.

I wish, however, first of all, to say a word or two in regard to the resolution which the hon. gentleman (Mr. R. L. Borden) has placed before the House. To the first clause of that resolution, I do not think that anybody, least of all myself, can take exception. It is an expression of words of the spirit in which I have dealt with the whole matter of this regiment in the Eastern Townships—"That the selection and appointment of officers in the militia should be made without regard to political consideration, which, if permitted to exercise an influence, will prove disastrous to the efficiency of the force." Sir, I take straight, square issue with the leader of the Opposition and his political friends on this question. I MAINTAIN THAT, IN THE ACTION I HAVE TAKEN AND IN THE SPIRIT WITH WHICH I HAVE ACTED, I HAVE OPPOSED THE INTERFERENCE OF POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS IN MILITIA APPOINTMENTS. I maintain, Sir, that the protest which I made was a protest against the political complexion of a certain squadron of this regiment, and that, had I not made that protest, I should have been worthy of such censure as the hon. gentleman expresses in this resolution. But, having made that protest, I claim that I deserve the thanks of gentlemen who profess to be influenced by these sentiments in regard to the militia; instead of censuring me, they ought to have thanked me and supported me in my action.

REPORT OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE OF COUNCIL.

The hon. gentleman has referred to the correspondence which has been laid on the table. I wish very briefly to refer to the first item in that correspondence, which is a copy of the report of the sub-committee of council having had under consideration certain recent public utterances of the right honourable the Earl of Dundonald, the conclusion of which was to dispense with the services of that officer as General Officer Commanding the militia of Canada. I would like to say, Sir, as a matter personal to myself—and I think that the House and the country will justify me in taking up a few moments of time in dealing with the personal question—I WAS NOT A MEMBER OF THAT SUB-COMMITTEE OF COUNCIL, AND ITS WORK WAS DONE AND ITS RECOMMENDATION MADE DURING MY ABSENCE FROM OTTAWA. AS A MEMBER OF THE COUNCIL I HAD NOTHING WHATSOEVER TO DO WITH THE FORM OF THAT REPORT, OR WITH THE DRAWING UP OF IT, OR THE WORDING OF IT. I want to say this simply because I feel very much gratified indeed at the terms of that report and the way in which my personal conduct was endorsed and sustained by my colleagues in the Government. I will read, if I may, just one clause of that report, which, I think, embodies the whole question as between the hon. member (Mr. R. L. Borden) who has introduced this resolution, and the Government which that resolution condemns:

In the case of members of the Cabinet, while all have an equal degree of responsibility in a constitutional sense, yet in the practical working out of responsible government in a country of such vast extent as Canada, IT IS FOUND NECESSARY TO ATTACH A SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY TO EACH MINISTER FOR THE PUBLIC AFFAIRS OF THE PROVINCE OR DISTRICT WITH WHICH HE HAS CLOSE POLITICAL CONNECTION, AND WITH WHICH HIS COLLEAGUES MAY NOT BE SO WELL ACQUAINTED.

Mr. Fisher, while sharing with his colleagues that general responsibility already referred to, represents in a particular manner the Eastern Townships of the Province of Quebec. IF, WHEN IT WAS PROPOSED TO FORM A NEW REGIMENT IN THAT DISTRICT, HE INTERESTED HIMSELF IN THE WORK, AND SOUGHT TO MAKE THE ORGAN-

IZATION EFFECTIVE, HE WAS NOT MERELY EXERCISING A RIGHT; HE WAS DISCHARGING A DUTY BOTH TO THE PEOPLE OF THE DISTRICT AND TO HIS COLLEAGUES IN THE CABINET, who would expect him to inform himself of all the facts, and advise them, before approval by the Cabinet of the proposed arrangement.

Now, Sir, I maintain that while I had nothing to do with the wording of that clause, it contains not only the proper constitutional interpretation of the duties of a Minister of the Crown in the Government of Canada, but also a plain, common sense statement of the necessities of government in this country, and of the work which I have done in regard to the constitution, equipment and enlistment of this regiment. Sir, I will make a very short recapitulation of what had occurred.

THE FACTS OF THE MATTER STATED.

When this matter was first brought to my attention, I noted the appointment of a Montreal gentleman to be colonel of that regiment. I was afraid that people outside the district from which the regiment was to be recruited might not know the condition and circumstances of the district, might not know the people in the district, might not be able to deal with the matters in the district as well as those who were in the district born and bred, and acquainted with the people. I BELIEVED THAT IN THE MILITIA ORGANIZATION OF THIS COUNTRY LOCAL KNOWLEDGE IN THE RAISING OF A REGIMENT IS ESPECIALLY NECESSARY. IN AN OLD ESTABLISHED MILITIA ORGANIZATION IT WOULD NOT MATTER MUCH IF MEN FROM OUTSIDE WERE INTRODUCED INTO THAT ORGANIZATION. BUT WHEN IT COMES TO RECRUITING A NEW REGIMENT, THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN ENTIRELY NEW ORGANIZATION IN A COMMUNITY, I VENTURED TO THINK, AND THINK STILL, THAT IT WAS BETTER THAT MEN WITH LOCAL KNOWLEDGE SHOULD HAVE THE MANAGEMENT OF THAT ORGANIZATION. I leave myself in the judgment of the House and of the country on that point. The hon. leader of the Opposition (Mr. R. L. Borden) wanted to know why it was that the Minister of Militia suspended the work of the organization of the regiment. I would say to him that I made representations to my colleague that it was inadvisable that all the leading officers in that regi-

ment should be appointed from without the district. I pointed out the dangers to which I have just alluded, and I believe that it was on that ground that my colleague gave the order suspending the organization of the regiment. I will say further that it was not until some time after that I received letters from the Eastern Townships, pointing out a certain political complexion in the squadron that was afterwards so much discussed, I again spoke to my colleague, and again pointed out that there was not only danger of people from outside doing things not in accordance with local conditions and needs, but also danger of political strife being raised in regard to the organization of this regiment.

Mr. SAM HUGHES. —Have these letters to which the Minister has referred been brought down?

Mr. FISHER. All the papers have been brought down that are not of a confidential nature, and no more papers that I have anything to do with can be brought down, because they are of a confidential nature. Just at this point I may interrupt my argument to speak of this

MATTER OF CONFIDENTIAL LETTERS.

I leave myself in the judgment of the House and of the country, but is it not perfectly proper and right that men who are interested in certain public matters should be allowed to write to their representative, and express views to that representative, in regard to public affairs which are of a confidential nature, and which it would be highly improper to publish to the community at large? Sir, if it is contended that this can not be done, I venture to think that members of the Government and members of the Parliament will be seriously hampered in the exercise of their public duties. If we are not here to receive communications which the writers can consider confidential, we cannot receive the best information in regard to public affairs. Sir, it would interfere with the efficiency of every member of this House if all correspondence that comes from his constituents to him as their representative were to be open to the public and be laid before the public on the inconsiderate demand of anybody and everybody in this House. I venture to lay that down as a principle on which I am prepared to stand or fall.

A POLITICAL CAST IN THE ORGANIZATION FROM THE START.

When the hon. gentleman interrupted me, I was saying that when these representations were made to me I then only, and only then, and for the first time then, began to look upon the matter as in any sense political. I RECEIVED A CLIPPING FROM A NEWSPAPER OUT THERE, WHICH MADE SOME REMARKS AS TO THE POLITICAL COMPLEXION OF THE NEW ORGANIZATION, AND I RECEIVED LETTERS WHICH INDICATED THAT A CERTAIN SQUADRON OF THAT ORGANIZATION HAD A POLITICAL COMPLEXION. I did speak to my colleague, the Minister of Militia (Sir Frederick Borden), on that point, and it was in consequence of that that he brought me into contact with the two military officers, Colonel Whitley and Colonel Smart. When I met these officers, and found out exactly what they were recommending, I was, as I stated on a former occasion, astounded to find the list of officers that was proposed for certain squadrons. The leader of the Opposition (Mr. R. L. Borden) has read some of my remarks to-day, and taking out a sentence here and there, he has endeavoured to attribute a false representation, a mistaken representation, of the whole of those remarks. I shall go back, if I may, and allude to some of those remarks. I am quoting from the unrevised "Hansard," page 4762. I said:

I took no exception to this. But I found a recommendation in regard to the neighbourhood of Sweetsburg, which, I confess, surprised me, and to which I did take exception. I must premise my explanation in regard to this matter by saying that SENATOR BAKER, OF SWEETSBURG, IS THE ACKNOWLEDGED AND ACTIVE LEADER OF THE CONSERVATIVES OF THAT DISTRICT. I FOUND THIS LIST OF PROPOSED NAMES FOR THE STAFF FOR THE NEIGHBORHOOD OF SWEETSBURG. FIRST, Mr. JOHN M. GIBSON, A NEPHEW OF SENATOR BAKER, AND TALKED OF AS THE POSSIBLE CONSERVATIVE CANDIDATE IN THE CONSTITUENCY OF MISSISQUOI, TO BE THIRD IN COMMAND OF THAT REGIMENT. DR. PICKEL, ONE OF THE STRONGEST CONSERVATIVE WORKERS OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD, AND A FAMILY CONNECTION OF SENATOR BAKER, TO BE MAJOR

IN COMMAND OF THE SQUADRON, WHICH, THOUGH GAZETTED FOR ADAMSVILLE, WAS TO BE CHANGED TO SWEETSBURG TO SUIT HIS CONVENIENCE. MR. G. H. BAKER, SON OF SENATOR BAKER, TO BE SENIOR CAPTAIN OF THE SAID SQUADRON. MR. THOMAS R. PICKEL, SON-IN-LAW OF SENATOR BAKER, TO BE THE JUNIOR CAPTAIN OF THE SAID SQUADRON. THEN THERE WERE THE NAMES OF TWO GENTLEMEN, MESSRS. STEACIE AND REYNOLDS, OF MONTREAL, TO BE LIEUTENANTS. AND DOWN AT THE BOTTOM OF THE LIST MR. THOMAS F. COTTON, A LIBERAL, SON-IN-LAW OF THE ABOVE-MENTIONED JOHN M. GIBSON, AND GRAND NEPHEW OF SENATOR BAKER.

The "Hansard" says "son-in-law." He is a nephew, not a son-in-law, of Mr. Gibson, and a grand nephew of Senator Baker. The leader of the Opposition undertook to say that I was dealing with that from a purely political standpoint. He read that passage, and said that there was nothing about qualification there, and he tried to make this House believe that I was dealing with the matter purely from a political standpoint, without any regard to the question of qualification. But if the hon. gentleman had read the very next sentence he would have seen that I did deal with it. With a disingenuousness which I did not expect from a man in his position in this country, the leader of the Opposition suppressed the following sentence, and it is this:

I TOLD THESE GENTLEMEN THAT, PUTTING ASIDE ANY QUESTION OF MILITARY QUALIFICATIONS, WHICH I AFTERWARDS WENT INTO——

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. I beg my hon. friend's pardon. I read that very thing which he says I did not read.

Mr. FISHER. I accept the hon. gentleman's correction, but if he did read it, he read it after turning around to his followers and impressing them, as he wants to impress upon the people of this country, that I was dealing with this matter purely from a political standpoint, and that military qualifications had nothing whatever to do with my recommendation. He says he read it, and I accept his statement, but if he did read it,

he did not read it in connection with that; he read it afterwards, at a time when it did not appear to have any connection at all with that.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. I read it immediately after.

Mr. FISHER. I went on further to say this, and I am going to repeat it here and now, and I say that it is not only a justification of what I did in this matter, but it makes imperative the course which, had I not pursued it, I would have been open to the severest condemnation and censure in regard to this regiment.

—SUCH A LIST OF OFFICERS FOR THAT SQUADRON, IN THAT NEIGHBORHOOD, WOULD BE HELD TO BE AN INSTANCE OF POLITICAL PREFERMENT, AND THAT IT WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE TO REMOVE FROM THE MINDS OF THE PEOPLE OF THE DISTRICT OF BEDFORD THE IMPRESSION THAT THE COLONEL WHO MADE SUCH RECOMMENDATIONS AND WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE SUCCESS OF THIS REGIMENT, HAD DELIBERATELY UNDERTAKEN TO TURN THAT SQUADRON, IF NOT THE WHOLE REGIMENT, INTO A TORY POLITICAL ORGANIZATION.

The position which I took then, and which I take to-day, is this: Colonel Smart was a stranger going into the district of Bedford to organize this regiment. He appears to have got into the hands of certain people out there. He told me himself that he had no political intentions. I fully accept that statement. I believe Colonel Smart, in making the statement that he had no political intentions, made a statement which was absolutely accurate and truthful. But I pointed out to him, as I point out to this House and the country, that if he had the strongest political intentions of making that squadron a political Tory organization, he could not have chosen a set of names that would have more perfectly fitted his purpose. Sir, the very danger that I had foreseen when I protested to my colleague, the hon. Minister of Militia and Defence, that all the senior officers of this regiment should not be taken from Montreal, came rapidly about. Colonel Smart, through an error or an inadvertency, he tells me, and I accept his statement, had deliberately done the thing which would have stamped him as a political agent, and

which would have stamped the regiment as a political organization. I felt that it was my duty, as well as my right, to protest against such an action, such an occurrence and such a result.

TO REPLACE A LIBERAL BY A CONSERVATIVE IS NO POLITICAL INTERFERENCE IN TORY EYES.

Hon. gentlemen opposite are very solicitous against political interference. They do not condemn me at all, Sir, because I asked that Mr. Russell, a well-known Liberal should be removed from the place of major of another squadron, and that he should be replaced by a well-known Conservative, who had had military experience when Mr. Russell had none. They do not condemn me for that—oh, no; because there I was asking that a Liberal should be put down and a Conservative raised above him. They do not object at all to my recommendation that Captain Guy Carr, a well-known Compton Conservative, should take the place of Dr. Pickel, because I knew that Captain Carr was an experienced military officer, and that Doctor Pickel had never had any connection with the militia at all. They do not condemn me at all or take exception to that “political recommendation”—oh, no; because it was the recommendation of a Conservative, and therefore it is all right. Some years ago I read a witty saying from an eminent French writer, who was discussing the question of capital punishment. An appeal had been made to him and others to do away with the death penalty. In discussing the question, he put the whole argument pithily and well in this way:

Que messieurs les assassins commencent.

For the benefit of the hon. leader of the Opposition and others, I may say that it means:

Let the murderers commence in doing away with death.

I think I might apply that now to the question of political interference, and say: Let the Conservatives commence, and perhaps it will be well for the militia of the country.

THE RECOMMENDED LIST OF OFFICERS.

In that connection I have one or two other things to say which I will say as briefly as possible, about the list, &c. The hon. gentleman who has spoken alluded to Colonel Smart's letter to me and mine in recommending this list of officers, and

he said that he doubted the truth of that recommendation, and said that it was not the recommendation of the General Officer's whole list. What I was recommending was the list recommended by the General Officer in Command. I recommended it in the usual form of the Department of Militia, and signed it for my colleague, the hon. Minister of Militia and Defence. If the name of one officer was struck out, it did not militate in any way whatever against the recommendation of the rest of them by Lord Dundonald. Lord Dundonald made the recommendations, I signed them, and sent forward his recommendations. I struck one name out, and I will deal with that a little later on; but in this regard the hon. gentleman's criticism was rather disingenuous. The hon. gentleman talks about two Pickels and three Miltimores, and he refers also to Mr. Russell. THE HON. GENTLEMAN SAYS THAT I RECOMMENDED MR. RUSSELL, WHO HAD NO MILITARY EXPERIENCE. AS I HAVE JUST POINTED OUT, I RECOMMENDED HIS BEING REDUCED TO A LOWER RANK. I DID DO THAT BECAUSE HE HAD NO MILITARY EXPERIENCE, AND I RECOMMENDED THE APPOINTMENT OF AN EXPERIENCED MILITARY OFFICER TO TAKE PRECEDENCE OF HIM IN THE SQUADRON. THE CONSERVATIVES SAY THAT WAS ALL RIGHT. I will have something to say a little later on perhaps in regard to the general question of the recommendations of the General Officer Commanding. I said a few moments ago that the hon. gentleman said Colonel Smart's action was non-political. I admit Colonel Smart, but, as I said a few moments ago, I cannot refrain from saying again that although Colonel Smart's intentions were not political, his actions were intensely political—intensely political in the sense that they would have that effect upon the community. If there is one thing more important than another, it is that any regiment organized in the Eastern Townships should be efficient, that the officers chosen should be all men eminently qualified for the positions to which they are appointed, and that no political considerations should enter into the organization of the regiment. WHEN I FOUND, NOT COLONEL SMART'S, NOT COLONEL WHITLEY'S, NOT LORD DUNDONALD'S, BUT NO DOUBT THE POLITICAL INTRIGUES OF LOCAL POLITICIANS THERE, WHO HAD GOT THE EAR OF COLONEL SMART, MAKING THE REGIMENT A POLITICAL ORGANIZATION, I DID PROTEST, AND TO THAT EXTENT ONLY HAVE I INTERFERED ON POLITICAL GROUNDS.

Mr. MONK. Would the hon. gentleman be kind enough to tell us who are these political gentlemen who have obtained the ear of Colonel Smart?

Mr. FISHER. Well, apparent, they were the Baker family.

Mr. MONK. Will my hon. friend tell us if he has any evidence of that?

Mr. FISHER. I have no evidence except the list submitted, and I think that evidence is enough.

CAPTAIN ADAMS AND CAPTAIN CONVERSE.

The hon. leader of the Opposition has dwelt at some length upon the question of Mr. Adams and Captain Converse, and he has read my letter to Colonel Smart. That letter put the whole case in a nutshell. Mr. Adams is a young man of Eastern Township birth, who has been living for a number of years in Montreal, who has taken an active part in the militia organization there, and who has been an officer of the 6th Hussars for a number of years. This fall, at the military tournament in Montreal, Captain Adams took the first prize in equitation; a rather necessary qualification in a cavalry officer. Mr. Adams was a lieutenant in the 6th Hussars, and—I do not remember the exact date, but it was some time in the fall or early last winter—Colonel Whitley, his brigadier, recommended Mr. Adams as adjutant of the 6th Hussars. NOW, ALL I HAD THE TEMERITY TO DO WAS TO SUGGEST THAT IF MR. ADAMS WAS COMPETENT PHYSICALLY AND IN A MILITARY SENSE TO BE ADJUTANT OF THE 6TH HUSSARS, ON THE RECOMMENDATION OF THE BRIGADIER, HE WAS ALSO COMPETENT TO BE ADJUTANT OF THE 13TH DRAGOONS. I therefore wrote to Colonel Smart to suggest that as Mr. Adams was an Eastern Townships man, where he knew the people, where he had been born and brought up, where he was a popular young man, who could lead a great many recruits into the ranks, he should be given a commission in this regiment, rather than to take absolute strangers to the district: men who knew nothing of the people, men who knew nothing about local conditions or the geography of the country. I did have the temerity to suggest that. I suggested it not as a military expert, not as a man familiar with military matters, not as a man who undertook to decide upon Mr. Adams' military qualifications, but as a man

of some little common sense. As a man who does know the district of Bedford, and who does know the local conditions, I believe that such a man as Mr. Adams would not only be an ornament to the corps, but would be of great use to the organization of the corps in that district. The leader of the Opposition read the statement by Colonel Smart in his letter to Lord Dundonald—not any statement Lord Dundonald made to me in regard to Mr. Adams—that Mr. Adams was physically unfit for the position, and yet his own brigadier within four months before that had recommended Mr. Adams to be adjutant, the very same position, in the 6th Hussars. In suggesting the name of Mr. Adams under the circumstances, was I interfering politically? No. I was interfering simply in a common sense way in the organization of a new regiment. I GRANT FULLY, AND NO MAN IS MORE PREPARED TO ADMIT IT THAN I AM, THAT ON PURELY MILITARY QUALIFICATIONS THE MILITARY EXPERTS AT THE COMMAND OF THE GOVERNMENT OUGHT TO RULE. BUT WHEN IT COMES TO MATTERS CONNECTED WITH THE AFFAIRS OF THIS COUNTRY, WHEN IT COMES TO MATTERS INVOLVING LOCAL KNOWLEDGE OF LOCAL CONDITIONS AND KNOWLEDGE OF THE PEOPLE OF CANADA, I VENTURE TO THINK THAT THE PUBLIC MEN OF CANADA KNOW MORE THAN ANY EXPERT, MILITARY OR OTHERWISE. The leader of the Opposition has said that Captain Converse is a Conservative. I do not know whether he is or whether he is not. I have only this to say: that my colleague, the Minister of Marine and Fisheries, wrote to me, asking me to recommend Captain Converse for the position as adjutant of that regiment. It does not look as if he were a Conservative, unless the Minister of Marine and Fisheries is so favorable to the Conservatives that he should recommend one. Anyway, I do not know whether Mr. Converse is a Conservative or not.

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. It shows that there was no politics in it.

Mr. FISHER. As my colleague the Minister of Militia says, it shows that there are no politics in our recommendations.

The House took recess at 6 o'clock, and when it resumed, at 8 o'clock, the debate on Mr. Borden's amendment was continued by the Minister of Agriculture.]

ON GAZETTING THE OFFICERS, AND A QUESTION OF VERACITY.

Mr. FISHER. Mr. Speaker, before you left the chair at six o'clock, I had touched upon some remarks of the hon. leader of the Opposition in regard to his interpretation of certain things which appeared in the letters which passed between myself and Colonel Smart. There was one matter, however, which the hon. gentleman alluded to which I did not take up, and upon which I would now like to say a word or two. The hon. gentleman quoted from remarks of mine which were made in this House on a former occasion, and from which he wished to draw the conclusion that I had said that the General Officer Commanding knew certain things at a time when he did not know those things. I want to say to the hon. gentleman, and I request him to accept the statement, that his interpretation of what I said then, whatever the language may bear, was not the one I had in my mind. I venture to think that my words as reported in "Hansard" do not bear the interpretation which the hon. gentleman put upon them. But still I will leave the matter of the interpretation of the single sentence to one side, and will say, and say positively and distinctly, that when I spoke on that occasion I meant to say that the General Officer Commanding, at the time he made his speech in Montreal at the military banquet in question, knew what I then alluded to. These are the words, and that is my interpretation of them, at page 4610 of the unrevised "Hansard":

Lord Dundonald goes on to say a number of things to which I shall not allude with regard to Mayor Pickel, &c., as I have already dealt with them. He, however, then goes on to show clearly by a letter to Colonel Pinault—

That is evidently a misprint, because I am not aware that there was any letter TO Colonel Pinault to be shown, but there was one FROM Colonel Pinault—

—that he was perfectly well aware of the fact that I had been requested by my colleague to sign this particular recommendation. He knew perfectly well that that list of officers was to be gazetted, with the understanding that that name should be stricken out. And yet his words at the banquet of Montreal, I submit to any unprejudiced person, would lead the public to believe that I, the Minister of Agriculture, had taken a recommendation of my colleague, the Minister of Militia, and had changed it on my own responsibility.

Now, Sir, that was not the case. THE WHOLE RECOMMENDATION WAS SIGNED BY ME, ACTING FOR MY COLLEAGUE, THE MINISTER OF MILITIA. THE STRIKING OUT OF THAT NAME WAS DONE BY ME, HAVING BEEN DISCUSSED BETWEEN COLONELS WHITLEY AND SMART, THE MINISTER OF MILITIA AND MYSELF, AND WAS DONE BY ME AFTER THE RECEIPT OF A LETTER FROM LIEUT.-COLONEL SMART REQUESTING ME TO DO IT—REQUESTING ME TO DO IT BECAUSE HE HAD COMMUNICATED WITH DR. PICKEL, AND THAT GENTLEMAN HAD GIVEN HIS FINAL ANSWER IN REGARD TO THIS APPOINTMENT, AND THAT FINAL ANSWER WAS THAT DR. PICKEL DID NOT WISH TO GO INTO THE "GAZETTE." THEN, AND THEN ONLY, I STRUCK OUT THE NAME, SIGNED THE RECOMMENDATION, AND SENT IT FORWARD TO COUNCIL TO BE EMBODIED IN AN ORDER IN COUNCIL.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. Are the dates wrong—the dates of the 19th?

LORD DUNDONALD KNEW THE FACTS AND CIRCUMSTANCES.

Mr. FISHER. I will come to that in a moment or two. My statement in the House on the former occasion, I contend, shows clearly that that was what I meant. BUT IN CASE ANYBODY CHOOSES TO INTERPRET IT DIFFERENTLY, I WANT TO SAY NOW AGAIN THAT THAT WAS WHAT I MEANT, NAMELY, THAT LORD DUNDONALD, WHEN HE MADE THAT SPEECH IN MONTREAL, HAVING RECEIVED A LETTER THAT MORNING FROM COLONEL SMART, KNEW THAT COLONEL SMART HAD COMMUNICATED WITH ME AND HAD ASKED FOR THE STRIKING OUT OF DR. PICKEL'S NAME. THEREFORE MY CONTEXTION THAT LORD DUNDONALD KNEW PERFECTLY WELL THE CIRCUMSTANCES UNDER WHICH THAT NAME WAS STRICKEN OUT BY ME AT THE TIME HE MADE THIS ATTACK UPON ME, IS COMPLETELY AND ABSOLUTELY TRUE. Sir, I am not going to enter into that question. Lord Dundonald's speech and Lord Dundonald's actions are matters for which he can answer. I make no accusation. I make no reflection. I leave that, Sir, for the country and the public and the Empire to decide. But in regard to this matter,

and the statements and implications of that gentleman, and the statements and implications of the hon. leader of the Opposition, I wish to make the facts absolutely clear.

My hon. friend opposite, a few minutes ago, and before, undertook to say that it was somewhat difficult to reconcile the sequence of events in regard to these letters. The hon. gentleman made an insinuation that possibly the letter of mine of the 20th was written afterwards, for the purpose of putting another complexion on events. I am surprised that the hon. gentleman would demean himself by making such an insinuation. I had supposed the hon. gentleman understood the decencies of debate as well as the decencies of treatment between gentlemen so as not to make such a statement as that. But, Sir, I must deal with the circumstances according to what he has said, and I will proceed to do so.

PASSAGE OF THE GAZETTE AND COLONEL SMART'S LETTERS.

On the morning of the 19th of May, Colonel Smart came to my office, saying that he had come up to secure the passage of the gazette. My hon. friend, the Minister of Militia, was away from Ottawa. He came to me, pointed out his recommendations, and asked me to see that they were put through. I said to him, in effect: "IF YOU WILL GO TO THE MILITIA DEPARTMENT, AND SEE THAT THE MILITARY BRANCH MAKES THE RECOMMENDATIONS, I WILL ACT FOR MY COLLEAGUE, THE MINISTER OF MILITIA, BECAUSE WE HAVE TALKED THIS MATTER OVER. I KNOW WHAT WAS IN HIS MIND, AND HIS INTENTION, I KNOW WHAT WAS THE AGREEMENT MADE BETWEEN YOU AND HIM, AND IN HIS ABSENCE, FOR THE PURPOSE OF FAVORING WHAT YOU WANT, OF DOING WHAT YOU WANT, I WILL SIGN THE RECOMMENDATION AND PUT IT THROUGH COUNCIL." Colonel Smart then left me. In his letter of the same date, dated the Russell House, 1 p.m., Ottawa, May 19, he says:

As arranged with you this morning, a new list of recommendations has been made out, and is now in the hands of the Deputy Minister of Militia, and I trust you will see it goes through Council to-day.

The recommendation re Dr. Pickel is included, to be dealt with by you.

Then he goes on and alludes to some other matters in connection with the regiment. The recommendation from the Deputy Minister of Militia did not come to me until next morning, the 20th. The letter of recommendation was inclosed in a letter from Colonel Pinault to me. It was dated the 19th, but coming through the mail, it did not reach my office until the morning of the 20th. Colonel Smart appears to have gone back to Montreal on the evening of the 19th. His letter says that he will meet me at the House. I do not know whether he met me at the House or not; I do not remember that he did. He went back to Montreal that evening as is evidenced by a further letter from Colonel Smart, written from Montreal on the evening of that same day, and on which he had addressed to me the letter from the Russell House, dated 1 p.m. He left on the afternoon train, and addressed to me this letter from Montreal on the evening of the 19th:

Dear Mr. Fisher,—Immediately on my return this evening I MET LIEUTENANT-COLONEL WHITLEY AND DISCUSSED FULLY WITH HIM ALL MATTERS IN CONNECTION WITH OUR INTERVIEW OF TO-DAY. COLONEL WHITLEY WAS PLEASED TO LEARN THAT EVERYTHING WAS ARRANGED SATISFACTORILY, AND AT HIS REQUEST I TELEPHONED TO SWEETSBURG WITH A VIEW OF GETTING FROM DR. PICKEL HIS FINAL ANSWER AS TO WHETHER OR NOT IT WAS HIS INTENTION TO REMAIN IN THE SQUADRON, BECAUSE, AS I STATED TO YOU TO-DAY, HE HAD INTIMATED TO ME HIS LUKEWARMNESS IN THE MATTER. I NOW HAVE HIS FINAL DECISION, WHICH IS THAT HE GIVES UP ALL CONNECTION WITH THE SQUADRON. IN ACCORDANCE, THEREFORE, WITH DR. PICKEL'S REQUEST, I CAN NOW, AS COMMANDING OFFICER OF THE REGIMENT, REQUEST YOU TO KINDLY MAKE THE CHANGE IN THE "GAZETTE" BY LEAVING DR. PICKEL'S NAME OUT.

I do not see any difficulty about the sequence of events which the hon. gentleman finds it so difficult to understand. It seems to me to be perfectly clear, and had the hon. gentleman read this correspondence with attention, had he noted all the facts and not tried to take out something here and there on

which he could hang an argument, he would have been able to see the sequence of events just as clearly as I am now demonstrating them. Colonel Smart went on to say :—

I sincerely hope that this will meet with your approval, and in view of the short time between now and date of camp, you will kindly see that all the recommendations pass Council to-morrow.

Thanking you for your kind consideration and assistance, believe me,

Yours very sincerely,

CHAS. A. SMART,

Lt.-Col. commanding 13th S. L. Dragoons.

At the bottom of that letter was the following written in the handwriting of Colonel Whitley :

In view of above I certainly recommend that Lieutenant-Colonel Smart's suggestion be followed.

FRED. WHITLEY,

Lt.-Col. commanding "E" Cav. Brigade.

Montreal, May 19, 1904.

Here, Sir, is a request from the commanding officer of this regiment, on whose recommendation the general had included Dr. Pickel's name in that list, to strike the name out, because Dr. Pickel had intimated to him that he did not want to have it in. And we have the endorsement of the brigadier, Colonel Whitley, to Lieutenant-Colonel Smart's request. On the receipt of the letter, I took up the recommendation which had been sent me by Colonel Pinault, the Deputy Minister of Militia, and which was lying on my desk, and struck out the name of Dr. Pickel, and signed opposite "Sydney Fisher for F. W. Borden." I signed at the bottom my name "Sydney Fisher for F. W. Borden, Minister of Militia and Defence," and I sent that recommendation to Council, where it was embodied in the Order in Council passed and signed by His Excellency within a few days. To corroborate what I have just said, I must mention that on the same day I wrote the letter addressed to Colonel Whitley :

Ottawa, May 20th, 1904.

Dear Colonel Whitley,—I have not had an opportunity to reply to your letters of the 14th and 15th May

earlier, but yesterday I had an interview with Colonel Smart, at which I think all arrangements were satisfactorily made to push along the establishment of the 13th Hussars.

This letter was written on the 20th of May, and it was on the 19th I had the interview with Colonel Smart.

I HAVE READ YOUR LETTERS AND THE INCLOSURES, AND WANT TO ASSURE YOU NOT ONLY THAT I AM VERY GLAD THINGS HAVE NOW BEEN SETTLED, BUT THAT I APPRECIATE THE EFFORTS WHICH YOU AND COLONEL SMART HAVE MADE TO MAKE THINGS SATISFACTORY. I HAVE WRITTEN TO OUR FRIENDS TELLING THEM THIS HAS BEEN DONE, AND URGING THEM TO TAKE HOLD OF THE WORK ENERGETICALLY AND LOYALLY, AND I AM SURE THEY WILL DO SO. I think you will appreciate that I have asked nearly as much as impetuous friends in the country expected, but I think that what I have asked has been entirely reasonable, and that some of these things at any rate were absolutely necessary to remove the impression which had been created by the unfortunate earlier recommendations.

My hon. friend is very keen at drawing conclusions. Well, I think he might draw the conclusion from this letter that I had found things done which would be detrimental to the interests of the regiment, and was glad to have been able to improve matters. I went on to say :

I have just signed, on behalf of Sir Frederick Borden, the "Gazette," and expect to put it through this afternoon.

I here stated that I had just signed the "Gazette." I did sign it on the 20th, and I stated that on the 19th I had had an interview with Colonel Smart. What difficulty can there be in following the sequence of events? I do not see that the sequence is in any way involved or militates in any shape or form against the statement of facts I have made. I think I have dealt pretty thoroughly with all the matters the hon. gentleman has brought up regarding my political interference.

A TORY ORGANIZATION AND A FAMILY COMPACT.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. Might I ask the hon. gentleman what it is which is referred to in Colonel Smart's letter of the 19th of May, to be found on page 34, when he used this expression :

The recommendation re Dr. Pickel is included, to be dealt with by you.

Also the pencil note in the memorandum which was returned by Colonel Smart to the Minister of Agriculture : "The Minister is to fix this," that was opposite Dr. Pickel's name.

Mr. FISHER. The explanation is very simple. I have already said that an interview which took place between Colonels Whitley and Smart and the Minister of Militia and myself, at the instance of my colleague, with regard to the affairs of the regiment, we have before us the list of officers which I have already characterized and need not characterize again. In that list was Dr. Pickel's name. In it were also the names of Captain Baker, Mr. T. R. Pickel, Mr. Cotton and Mr. J. F. Gibson. I FOUND IN THAT LIST A POLITICAL COMPLEXION WHICH I INFORMED COLONELS WHITLEY AND SMART WOULD DAMN THE REGIMENT AS A TORY ORGANIZATION. MORE THAN THAT, I VENTURE TO SAY THAT THAT LIST HAD A FAMILY COMPLEXION WHICH SHOULD DAMN IT EQUALLY IN THE EYES OF THE CONSERVATIVES, NOT ONLY AS A POLITICAL ORGANIZATION, BUT AS A FAMILY COMPACT. When Colonel Smart told me that he had no political intention, I said to him : "I accept your statement, Colonel Smart. I suppose you have no political intention, but if you had desired to do something which would stamp that regiment as a Tory organization, you could not have selected a list of officers which would more completely have that effect." Colonel Smart then said to me : "What can be done ?" I replied : "HERE ARE SOME GENTLEMEN WHO ARE QUALIFIED. MR. J. F. GIBSON IS A GRADUATE OF THE MILITARY SCHOOL AT KINGSTON. HIS NAME WILL BE UNOBJECTIONABLE TO ANYBODY IN THE TOWNSHIPS, WHETHER LIBERAL OR CONSERVATIVE. DR. PICKEL'S NAME IS THE NEXT, BUT THAT NAME WOULD NOT APPEAL IN THE WAY OF MILITARY QUALIFICATIONS TO ANYBODY. You are asking that Dr. Pickel should be made major of the squadron. You want to give him an important military position in the regiment, one requiring military experience ; one in which he would be

entrusted with the lives of a large number of men, one in which he would be obliged to handle those men, not only on the parade grounds, but, should the occasion arise, on the field of battle." Dr. Pickel was a man who had never taken an interest in military matters, who had never held an appointment in the militia. On what ground, then, could his appointment as major of a squadron in that regiment be justified? I pointed to his name and said: "There is one you can strike out on the ground that he has no qualification, and if it be struck out, the defects of the list will be minimized. The striking out of that name will lessen its political appearance, and the people will not be so disposed to condemn the regiment as a political organization." DR. PICKEL'S NAME WAS STRUCK OUT BECAUSE HE WAS TO BE APPOINTED TO A RESPONSIBLE POSITION, WHICH CALLED FOR A MAN OF MILITARY EXPERIENCE, AND HE HAD NONE, AND BECAUSE THE WHOLE LIST WAS SO POLITICAL IN ITS APPEARANCE SOMETHING HAD TO BE DONE TO REMOVE THE EVIDENCE OF POLITICAL INTERFERENCE." Colonel Whitley and Colonel Smart seemed to acknowledge the force of what I said. But Colonel Smart said that as he had urged Dr. Pickel to take that position, as he had asked him to go into the regiment, he did not feel like asking him not to send in his name. Then it was suggested—and I do not know from whom the suggestion came, but I think it was my hon. colleague who suggested it—that when such a name as that came before the Minister of Militia, the Minister of Militia would not hesitate to strike it out, because the recommendations of the general are subject to be changed by the Minister. When the recommendations of the general are asked to be put into effect, they can only be put into effect by the approval of the Minister.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. May I ask the hon. gentleman a question?

Mr. FISHER. Certainly.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. I was referring to an interview of the 10th May; but I think the hon. gentleman is referring to one of the 8th?

Mr. FISHER. I was describing events that led up to it.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. "The recommendation re Dr. Pickel is included, to be dealt with by you." Does that mean that it was to be struck out by the hon. gentleman if he desired to do so?

Mr. FISHER. It refers to an arrangement by which Dr. Pickel's name was to be struck out in the first place by the Minister of Militia. That morning, the Minister being absent, Lieutenant-Colonel Smart came to my office and asked me to go with him and put the order through which my colleague had arranged to do, as evidenced by Colonel Pinault's letter. And I, acting for the Minister of Militia, carried out the intention of the Minister of Militia as expressed to Lieutenant-Colonel Smart and to Lieutenant-Colonel Whitley.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. May I ask the hon. gentleman one more question?

Mr. FISHER. As many as you like.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. I do not wish to interrupt without the hon. gentleman's consent.

Mr. FISHER. You have my free and frank consent.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. Was the Minister of Militia present at the interview of 19th of May?

Mr. FISHER. No, he was out of town. And it was in consequence of his being out of town that I had to act for him so as to get the "Gazette" through, at the request of Lieutenant-Colonel Whitley and Lieutenant-Colonel Smart.

Now, I think I have explained that reference and have made clear the sequence of events. If the hon. gentleman (Mr. Borden) has any other questions to ask me I shall be glad to answer.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. MY HON. FRIEND (MR. FISHER) HAS ANSWERED THEM MOST SATISFACTORILY.

ACTION TO UNDO POLITICAL INTERFERENCE NOT TO INTRODUCE IT.

Mr. FISHER. Hear, hear. For once, we agree. There are some other points in this resolution concerning which I wish to say a few words. There is one thing in it which is remarkable. We have already had a debate in the House on this question. In that debate Lord Dundonald's name came prominently forward. And, in that debate, hon. gentlemen opposite dwelt

good deal on Lord Dundonald's name and on his position as General Officer Commanding. But, on this resolution it comes in only as an allusion at the end. Well, Mr. Speaker, I can only suppose that hon. gentlemen opposite, having slept over the question, having considered the whole bearing of this question, have changed their minds. They have come to the conclusion that they will attack me personally, and, through me, the Government of which I have the honour to be a member. They are discussing this resolution chiefly—almost altogether—in relation to the question of political interference. I think I have dealt with that in my own particular case. At any rate, I am ready to leave my case on that point as it stands. I know, however, two things. In the first place, by the order dispensing with Lord Dundonald's services, my colleagues did me the honour of espousing my cause, declaring that they agree with what I did, and saying that, so far as political interference was concerned, I was not guilty of the charge laid at my door. In the second place, in this motion the hon. gentleman alludes to the fact that what I had done was approved by the Government. We, therefore, take square issue with hon. gentlemen opposite on behalf of the Government and of the party which that Government represents, on this question of political interference. I stated this afternoon to what extent I would plead guilty. I stated this afternoon what I believed to be the essence of the question before the country, and that essence is embodied in the Order in Council dispensing with the services of Lord Dundonald. I will not read the paragraph again; but I may point out and repeat here that THE EXTENT OF POLITICAL INTERFERENCE TO WHICH I PLEAD GUILTY IS SIMPLY THIS—THAT WHEN I FOUND POLITICAL INTERFERENCE AND PREFERMENT BEING INTRODUCED INTO THIS REGIMENT I PROTESTED AGAINST IT. TO THAT EXTENT, AND ONLY TO THAT EXTENT, DID I BRING POLITICS INTO THE MATTER. I HAVE ALREADY PROVEN CLEARLY THAT, IN THE DISCUSSIONS WHICH AROSE AS TO THE QUALIFICATIONS OF THE OFFICERS, I ADVOCATED THE APPOINTMENT OF CONSERVATIVES OVER LIBERALS, THAT WHEN I DID SUGGEST THAT A CERTAIN OFFICER WAS NOT QUALIFIED FROM A MILITARY POINT OF VIEW AND COULD NOT BE JUSTIFIABLY APPOINTED AS MAJOR OF THAT SQUADRON, THE ONLY NAME I SUGGESTED AS AN ALTERNATIVE WAS THAT OF AS PRO- NOUNCED A CONSERVATIVE AS HIMSELF. Hon. gentlemen opposite talk about my recommending certain gentlemen of the name of Miltimore. These gentlemen were appointed to

subordinate positions : one, who had had experience in camp, was recommended and ratified by Lieutenant-Colonel Smart as captain, and the others as junior lieutenants. I have the word of the General Officer Commanding and other military authorities that, when a new regiment is to be organized some men not qualified by military experience must necessarily be given positions in that regiment. But my whole contention was that where men of no military experience were put in as officers, they should take subordinate positions, and that the men who were given responsible positions should have military experience. I did not care whether they were Liberals or Conservatives. I recommended and suggested the appointment of Conservatives who had military experience.

A QUESTION OF ENDANGERING MILITIA EFFICIENCY.

Sir, the hon. leader of the Opposition (Mr. R. L. Borden) said this afternoon that, as Minister of Agriculture and a civilian I was endangering the efficiency of the militia of this country. I FOUND THE RECOMMENDATION OF THE GENERAL OFFICER COMMANDING, I FOUND THE RECOMMENDATION OF LIEUTENANT-COLONEL SMART, IN FAVOUR OF A MAN WHO HAD NO MILITARY QUALIFICATION FOR A RESPONSIBLE POSITION, AND I ASKED THAT HE SHOULD NOT BE PLACED IN THAT POSITION. WHO, I ASK YOU, SIR, HAS THE INTEREST OF THE MILITIA AT HEART? IS IT THE GENERAL OFFICER COMMANDING WHO RECOMMENDS SUCH A MAN? IS IT THE COLONEL OF THE REGIMENT, ANOTHER MILITARY EXPERT WHO RECOMMENDS SUCH A MAN? OR IS IT A CIVILIAN WHO URGE THAT A MAN GIVEN A POSITION OF COMMAND IN THE MILITIA SHALL BE ONE OF SOME MILITARY EXPERIENCE? Sir, I leave my conduct in the hands of the House, and, with the history of that case as I have given it, I believe I shall be backed up not only by Liberals, but by Conservatives, by all who have at heart the interests of the militia of Canada.

LORD DUNDONALD'S FINAL STATEMENT.

The last paragraph of this resolution says :

The House regrets that this unwarrantable interference, approved by the Government, not only unduly delayed the organization of the regiment, but has culminated in depriving the militia of Canada of an experienced and distinguished commanding officer.

The whole tenor of the document and of the remarks of my hon. friends on the other side, show clearly and distinctly that they have thrown Lord Dundonald overboard, but I did not suppose they would go to the extent of throwing over entirely and wholly Lord Dundonald's final statement as issued in the News of last Saturday. They say that my conduct has culminated in depriving the militia of Canada of an experienced and distinguished officer. What does Lord Dundonald himself say? In his statement, taken from the Ottawa Citizen of Monday, June 20—and I believe this is a reprint of the statement which appeared in the Toronto News, which was revised and authorized by Lord Dundonald—he says:

In my efforts I was constantly hampered by interference with that particular part of my work. This interference began very soon after my arrival. It has continued incessantly ever since. Mr. Fisher's interest in the affairs of the Thirteenth Scottish Light Dragoons was simply the final incident in a long list of various phases of obstruction.

I am not the guilty one. I am only the last straw that broke the camel's back. All I can say is that if my political interference is a fair example of the political interference about which Lord Dundonald complains in this tract, he has very little to complain of. I presume from the text of the whole statement that this was an aggravated case, that it was a case so aggravated that the general could no longer contain himself. I SUPPOSED WHEN HE MADE THE SPEECH IN MONTREAL, AND THE REPORT FIRST CAME OUT, THAT IT WAS A TEMPORARY OUTBURST, BUT I FIND FROM LORD DUNDONALD'S OWN STATEMENT IN THE LETTER WHICH HE ADDRESSED TO THE HON. MEMBER FOR NORTH VICTORIA (MR. SAM HUGHES) THAT HE WENT THERE WITH THE DELIBERATE PURPOSE AND INTENT OF SETTING THE HEATHER ON FIRE.

Mr. SAM. HUGHES. He has succeeded.

Mr. FISHER. He has succeeded?

Mr. SAM HUGHES. Yes.

Mr. FISHER. He has succeeded. That is all right. We will see what the results of the conflagration are.

Mr. MACPHERSON. A tempest in a pickle pot.

Mr. FISHER. I want to point out that if this is the policy of the hon. gentlemen opposite their contention and their conclusion has been entirely disproved out of the mouth of Lord Dundonald himself, and that, therefore, on the evidence of the General Officer Commanding, this resolution ought to fall to the ground.

COURSES OPEN TO THE G. O. C.

There are one or two things in this statement which I shall not discuss at length, but about which I must say a word or two. Under the heading of "Wanted a verdict," we have :

A course offering many attractions was to resign and issue a public statement giving my reasons. So far as I personally was concerned it would have been by far the easier and more pleasant course. The objection was that by so doing I would give neither the Government nor the people of Canada any real opportunity to pass judgment upon the matters brought to their attention.

That, of course, is a matter of judgment, and Lord Dundonald's judgment in regard to his course must be accepted. I must say myself, viewing it from the outside, that the judgment does not appeal to me.

An hon. MEMBER. A pity.

Mr. FISHER. And it appears to me that if Lord Dundonald had desired to draw the attention of the people of Canada successfully and effectually to anything concerning the militia, HE WOULD HAVE DONE SO MORE SUCCESSFULLY AND HAVE PUT HIMSELF LESS IN THE WRONG HAD HE DONE SO IN THE PROPER CONSTITUTIONAL METHOD AND NOT VIOLATED EVERYTHING CONNECTED WITH THE CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT OF THIS COUNTRY. The course which in this article Lord Dundonald rejects would have been a proper and dignified course for an officer of the Government. Lord Dundonald would have been quite justified if he felt his position as an officer of the Government was not consistent with the actions of the Government to have addressed a letter of resignation in whatever terms he chose to the Minister in whose department he was, to the Government of which he was an officer, and that course would have been a right and proper course under the constitutional Government of this country, and by adopting it he would not, as he has done in this case, have set at defiance every rule of constitutional government.

Mr. SPROULE. The letter of resignation might have been treated as confidential.

Mr. FISHER. Sir, the hon. gentleman knows quite well that the insinuation he is making could not have any foundation. The hon. gentleman could have moved that the papers connected with the resignation of Lord Dundonald should be brought down, and they would have been brought before the country in a proper constitutional way, while by the course pursued the whole has been done in a way which, if this gentleman has such a strong position as his friends think and he thinks, he certainly endangers and injures that position because he has set at defiance all the rules of constitutional government in this country and has left himself open to the most serious reflections and the most serious condemnations.

THE OPINION OF A MILITARY CRITIC.

I shall not go at any length into the question of the propriety of an officer of the Government discussing the actions of that Government, but I will point out this, that there have been instances of a similar character in the Old Country and here. There have been expressions of opinion in regard to the propriety of the General Officer Commanding the militia being independent of the Government of the country and independent of the Minister of Militia. Various authorities have been cited on this point. I am not going into it at any length, but I shall point out the fact that I have here under my hand the authority of an eminent militiaman and military critic in this country. In the course of a correspondence this gentleman inquires :

For my information and guidance might I have the authority quoted which permits the General Officer Commanding, an officer directly under the Minister of Militia, to receive and transmit as General Officer Commanding, commands from His Excellency.

Then in another case the same gentleman says :

May I respectfully request you will be so good as to quote to me the authority which permits the General Officer Commanding to receive and transmit any commands from His Excellency without its being an Order in Council, and then only by order of the Minister of Militia.

And then again he asks for any authority which allows an acknowledgment from the right hon. the Secretary of State for the Colonies to him to be forwarded through the General Officer Commanding without the order of the Minister of Militia.

Some hon. MEMBERS. Who wrote that?

Mr. FISHER. An eminent military authority in Canada who signs himself "Sam Hughes."

There are one or two other matters in regard to this subject in connection with which Lord Dundonald refers to me. The District Officer Commanding in the course of this memo, says:

The only possible way to get the new corps officered was to get local support and trust the opinion of the Commanding Officer entrusted with the duty of raising the regiment.

The hon. the leader of the Opposition (Mr. R. L. Borden) this afternoon dwelt a good deal on my advice in regard to the officering of this regiment. He dwelt on the fact that I had interfered because I had dared to suggest to Colonel Smart certain officers with certain qualifications.

EXPERT MILITARY OPINION VERSUS A KNOWLEDGE OF PLAIN FACTS.

The General Officer Commanding says that he ought to have this advice from the commanding officer. I DO NOT DENY FOR A MOMENT THAT WHEN IT COMES TO A QUESTION OF MILITARY QUALIFICATIONS IT IS THE DUTY OF THE COMMANDING OFFICER, THE MILITARY EXPERT, TO KNOW ABOUT THEM, BUT WHEN YOU COME TO RAISE AND ORGANIZE A NEW REGIMENT IN THIS COUNTRY, OR IN ANY OTHER COUNTRY, AS LONG AS THERE IS NOTHING THAT INTERFERES WITH MILITARY QUALIFICATIONS THERE ARE OTHER CONSIDERATIONS TO BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT IN THE SUCCESSFUL ORGANIZATION OF THE REGIMENT. There are considerations to be taken into account, in regard to which the people of the neighbourhood, even though they be civilians, little as they are to be considered in these matters, may find that they can give advice, in regard to which civilians who know the country, know the genius of the people, know the local conditions and circumstances, may be able to give advice which will be valuable to even a military expert—not advice on military affairs, not advice as to military qualifications. We have to take the word of the military expert for that. When Colonel Smart told me Captain Adams was physically disqualified to be the commander of the squadron, I said: That ends the matter. When I was told that it was military etiquette that the commanding officer of the regiment

should have the absolute choice of his own adjutant, and although I had suggested Captain Adams' name in place of Captain Converse, when I was told that it was a subject for the colonel alone to deal with, I SAID THAT IF IT WAS A MATTER OF MILITARY ETIQUETTE I HAD NOT A WORD TO SAY, NOTWITHSTANDING THE FACT THAT CAPTAIN ADAMS WAS ADJUTANT OF THE 6TH HUSSARS, AND THAT, AS AN EASTERN TOWNSHIPS MAN, HE WOULD BE WELL QUALIFIED TO BE ADJUTANT OF THE 13TH SCOTTISH LIGHT DRAGOONS, SEEING THAT HE HAD BEEN RECOMMENDED BY COLONEL WHITLEY TO BE ADJUTANT OF THE 6TH HUSSARS A FEW MONTHS BEFORE. But these are military matters. I do not presume to set up my opinion against that of the military expert in military matters, but when it comes to matters which are social, and which are local in their character, I do venture to think, in my presumption, that I know more about the Eastern Townships than Lord Dundonald or Colonel Smart. WHEN I FIRST UNDERTOOK TO SAY ANYTHING ABOUT THIS REGIMENT, IT WAS JUST ON THAT POINT THAT I SPOKE OF. THE MEN WHO CAME FROM MONTREAL TO COMMAND THE REGIMENT IN THE EASTERN TOWNSHIPS, NOT KNOWING THE PEOPLE, NOT KNOWING THE LOCAL CONDITIONS, NOT KNOWING THE VARIOUS CONDITIONS THAT GO TO MAKE IT A SUCCESS, HAVING MADE A MISTAKE, I ADVISED THEM, HOPING TO BE ABLE TO REMOVE SOME OF THE DIFFICULTIES WHICH CONFRONTED THEM IN THEIR IGNORANCE, AND THAT IS THE WHOLE FORCE AND FRONT OF MY OFFENDING IN THE MATTER. Again, I am not to set up my own opinion, but there is another opinion which I bow to as being that of a military expert. There was trouble a few years ago in regard to another General Officer Commanding, and these pregnant words were used in regard to that gentleman. The writer of these remarks was apparently interviewing His Excellency :

Re my remarks to His Excellency—what I there stated I repeat. I was somewhat taken aback at the cavalier manner in which he "pooh-poohed" my suggestions re soldiers as colonists and re Canadians becoming British soldiers. He seemed troubled with what I frankly confess to be, in my opinion, your complaint of knowing it all and of not wishing to hear facts. I suppose, then, he ought to have heard the facts.

What I said to him of you was that it was just possible you might make a mistake in selecting the officer to command a Canadian contingent.

These were the remarks made by this eminent military critic about the General Commanding the Canadian militia. "You might not be possessed of all the facts." And, therefore, of course, this gentleman undertook to advise His Excellency.

Some hon. MEMBERS. What is the name of that gentleman?

Mr. FISHER. That letter is signed "Sam. Hughes."

THE QUESTION OF POLITICAL MOTIVES.

The General Officer Commanding says that I was a witness against myself. He proceeds:

"That Mr. Fisher's motives were political, he himself admitted in his second speech in the House of Commons on June 10. This admission, I may observe, was singularly at variance with his earlier speech on the same day. In that speech, which was a prepared statement, he distinctly stated that his objections to Dr. Pickel were of a military nature, and that his interference was not due to political motives.

The hon. leader of the Opposition stated this afternoon, as he did on the former occasion, that my speech on that day was at variance with my statement. I venture to say that anybody who examines the two records will say that it was in no shape or way at variance with the statement. I STATED THAT I HAD MADE NO OBJECTION TO ANY OFFICER ON POLITICAL GROUNDS ALONE. I DID SO IN REGARD TO DOCTOR PICKEL BECAUSE HE HAD NO MILITARY EXPERIENCE, AND I DID SO BECAUSE I FOUND IT NECESSARY TO REMOVE THE TORY POLITICAL COMPLEXION OF THAT PARTICULAR SQUADRON.

Some hon. MEMBERS. Oh, oh.

Mr. FISHER. Hon. gentlemen nod their heads. That is political interference, they say. They and their friends are to be allowed to intrigue, are to be allowed to put their friends into the militia, are to be allowed to give their friends promotion in the militia, and are to be allowed, as in the old days, to

MAKE THE MILITIA OF CANADA A TORY PRESERVE.

And, Mr. Speaker, with that going on right under our noses, the Liberal who has at heart the interest of the militia is to be allowed to protest.

Mr. ROSAMOND. No Tory need apply.

Mr. FISHER, MR. GIBSON APPLIED, AND I EN-
DORSED HIM. CAPTAIN BAKER APPLIED, AND I
ENDORSED HIM. I RECOMMENDED CAPTAIN CARR
TO TAKE THE PLACE OF DR. PICKEL, AND I RECOM-
MENDED CAPTAIN HOLLAND TO BE PUT OVER
MR. RUSSELL, THE ONE A CONSERVATIVE AND THE
OTHER A LIBERAL. I SAID THAT SURGEON-MAJOR
MACDONALD, ONE OF THE MOST ACTIVE POLITIC-
IANS AGAINST ME IN MY COUNTY, SHOULD,
BECAUSE HE HAD BEEN CONNECTED WITH THE
MILITIA FOR YEARS BACK, BE OFFERED THE
SENIOR MEDICAL PLACE IN THE REGIMENT. I was
told that he did not wish to go into a cavalry regiment. I said
in one of the letters, which you can read, that I would be sorry
if he declined, and that I hoped that even for a short time he
would take the position, because he was a military officer who
had had experience. Yet the hon. gentleman says: "No Tory
need apply." I venture to say that I have proved that Tories
can apply and be endorsed by me if they have the military qua-
lifications which justify their appointment. THE SAME
SPIRIT WHICH THAT HON. GENTLEMAN ILLU-
STRATES TO-NIGHT, THE SAME SPIRIT WHICH FOR
YEARS KEPT THE LIBERALS OF THIS COUNTRY
OUT OF THE MILITIA OF CANADA, AND WOULD NOT
ALLOW THEM TO HAVE A PLACE IN THE MILITIA,
CONTINUES TO-DAY. IN FACE OF THE FACT THAT
THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY THERE ARE HUN-
DREDS OF LIBERALS WHO WANT TO GO INTO THE
MILITIA TO SERVE THEIR KING AND COUNTRY,
THESE MEN WANT TO CONTINUE THE INTRIGUES OF
THE OLD CONSERVATIVE PARTY, BUT I WANT TO
TELL THIS HOUSE, AND TO TELL THE PEOPLE OF
CANADA THAT AS LONG AS THERE IS A LIBERAL
GOVERNMENT IN POWER, AS LONG AS THE LIBER-
ALS HOLD A MAJORITY IN THIS COUNTRY, THEY
WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO CONTINUE THOSE
INTRIGUES. I TAKE ISSUE WITH THE HON. GEN-
TLEMEN OPPOSITE DIRECTLY AND STRAIGHT-
AWAY ON THAT POINT. The Liberal Government say
that politics shall not be introduced into the militia. If they
want to continue the militia as a Tory preserve, I tell them that
the Liberal Government will say to them that they shall not do
it by their intrigues and machinations.

That is the whole extent of any political interference in the
militia which the Liberal party or the Liberal Government
would countenance or allow. The general goes on to say that

there was a peculiar coincidence in the fact that I was acting Minister of Militia. Well, there was a coincidence, but I do not think it was peculiar. My colleague, the Minister of Militia, and myself had been discussing this question; we had been discussing the list of officers which was to be submitted; and notwithstanding the insinuation, notwithstanding the evil opinion of these people, thinking evilly, have in regard to myself, IT WAS THE MOST NATURAL THING IN THE WORLD THAT WHEN MY COLLEAGUE, THE MINISTER OF MILITIA, WENT AWAY FOR A DAY, HE SHOULD ASK ME TO SIGN THE RECOMMENDATION, INSTEAD OF GOING TO ONE OF HIS OTHER COLLEAGUES, WHO KNEW NOTHING ABOUT IT. The rest of the Government at that time knew nothing about it; the rest of the Government had not been concerned in it. The Minister of Militia and I, as representing the Townships—I who knew the local circumstances and conditions—had been consulting in regard to this matter. I had been giving suggestions with the view of making the regiment a success, and making it effective, and it was natural, the most natural thing in the world, that my colleague should ask me. It was a coincidence if you like, but I cannot acknowledge that it was peculiar.

A NATIONAL MILITIA, FREED FROM PARTY POLITICS, IS THE POLICY OF THE LIBERAL GOVERNMENT.

Mr. Speaker, I do not know that I need speak much longer; I have spoken at much greater length than I intended; I have been forced to do this, for I take issue straight and square on this resolution. It is a resolution condemning me, and through me the Government who have endorsed my action. I venture to think, Sir, that no political interference has been proven. On the contrary my action, which has been endorsed by the Government, was with a view of preventing all political interference. I venture to think that the statement that Lord Dundonald, by consequence of this incident has been lost to the militia of Canada, is not true; and I have proven that it is not true out of the mouth of the late General Officer Commanding. If hon. gentlemen opposite wish to take that question up further, they can do so. I am surprised, I must confess, that in this document and in this resolution they seem to have completely changed their minds since the former debate, when Lord Dundonald was in the mouth of every one of them; when Lord Dundonald's record and Lord Dundonald's actions were in the mouth of every one of them; while to-day there is none among them so poor as to do him honour.

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