

Fourth Day.
20 April 1907.

MILITARY
DEFENCE.
(Sir Frederick
Borden.)

this will apply to all the military units of the Dominion—only one desire, that is, to prepare in every possible way for the full protection of our own territory. We have shown, by relieving the War Office of the responsibility for the maintenance of Halifax and Esquimalt, how far we are willing to go, and I think we showed a few years ago, in the contingents that were sent to South Africa, what the spirit is that animates the people of Canada when the Empire seemed for a time to be in peril. I only wish to add that I believe thoroughly in the idea suggested here as to the adoption of uniform organization throughout the different parts of the Empire. There can be no difficulty whatever as to that. We in Canada have so organized our militia system from top to bottom, so far as we could do it. In the main we have adopted the principle that it is absolutely desirable that we should follow the lead of the War Office in all matters of organization, provided you do not change too frequently here, so that we cannot keep up with you. There can be no difficulty in doing that, and it is certainly a desirable thing to do. I believe thoroughly in the exchange of officers. I absolutely concur in the ideas expressed as to the education of officers. We are very glad indeed that the War Office here is giving us certain facilities in the matter of educating our officers which we are trying to take the full advantage of. Altogether, I think that matters are working very harmoniously, and I see no reason in the world why a great deal might not be accomplished in the way of preparing for any supreme struggle which might take place—which we hope will not take place, but which may take place—in the matter of keeping in close touch with the organization here in England, and in the matter of exchange of officers, and of bringing about a better understanding between officers and military affairs in the different Dominions and the central organization here in the British Islands.

Mr. DEAKIN : My Lord, and Mr. Haldane, it is true that I have not seen one of the papers laid before us this morning, but have no doubt that has not been due to any omission on the part of your officers. Owing to the circumstances under which we are assembled, I have already had occasion to mention casually that on arrival we were overwhelmed with a mass of printed information, the value and extent of which I have already acknowledged, but which, under the circumstances of pressure which prevail, are really, though in our possession, beyond our reach; so much so, that, occupied as one has been with the question immediately preceding this, I was not even aware of the existence of these valuable papers. The mere glance I have been able to give to them discovers that they are indeed most useful possessions of this Conference. These will take a high place, I believe, among the sources of knowledge which, after this Conference, will be placed at the disposal of the public of this country, and particularly before the public of our own countries, where I am sure the study of these papers will be of the greatest value to us all. Then we have been indebted to the masterly and luminous exposition of the principles of military defence, which we have had the privilege of hearing from the Right Honourable the Secretary for War. I trust that my colleagues on the Conference will not shudder if I venture to suggest that the sooner that statement gets in full to the public of the Empire the better. Unless there be some reason, not apparent to me, I do not know why it should not at once appear and be communicated to all who are interested in it. That, again, will be a storehouse to which we can refer for the elucidation of many matters. And for my own part, I wish that it would reach every citizen of all our Dominions.

It is not necessary, especially after the inquiries and criticisms of our friend the Minister of Defence for the Dominion of Canada, to dwell upon