

net.* Mr. Silverthorn was a farmer living near Toronto, who had served under Brock during the war, had done good service and had abundant energy and plenty of intelligence. Mr. Richardson, after serving for some years in the troop, moved to the old town of Niagara, where he practiced law for many years as a barrister.

No time appears to have been lost in procuring the men and setting to work. Drills were started and an organization completed and maintained in spite of repeated discouragement. The officers and men went to great expense to provide themselves with uniforms, and they were promised from time to time that swords and pistols would be issued to them. But they got nothing but the promises. In spite of these official discouragements, and in spite of the fact that they received no remuneration whatever, the officers and men of the troop continued to devote much time to drilling in field movements without arms. If the troops did not receive much practical official encouragement, they appear to have made a brave showing in their privately-purchased uniforms, and to have earned many compliments for their spirited and patriotic conduct.

The character of the troop as one of light dragoons† was a foregone conclusion. In a previous chapter the general change from heavy to light dragoons in the British service has been referred to, and the preference for light dragoons still held in the service. It must have been felt, too, in Canada, owing to the good work done during the War of 1812 by the 19th Light Dragoons and the various light troops of "Provincial Dragoons."

The character of the uniform was settled in a decidedly peculiar way, and with very interesting results. The story is well told by Captain F. C. Denison (later Lieut.-Colonel):—

"In arranging the uniform of the new troop, it so chanced that a master tailor of Her Majesty's 13th Light Dragoons,‡ named Wedge, had just about that time left the regiment and emigrated to York (now Toronto), where he had opened a tailoring establishment. This was too good an opportunity to be lost. Captain Denison at once decided upon adopting the 13th Light Dragoons as a model. The tailor was employed to make the necessary uniforms for officers and men, and in a short time the troop was fully supplied. From that accidental cause, the blue and buff uniform of the 13th Hussars became the uniform of the great body of cavalry of the Dominion of Canada. When the 13th Light Dragoons were changed to the 13th Hussars, the cavalry corps in this country (except the G.G.B.G., which retained the blue dragoon uniform) followed the change, and in the Fenian troubles, when that splendid regiment was sent to Canada, they found the Canadian cavalry dressed in their own familiar uniform.

When the remains of General Brock and Lieut.-Col. Macdonnell were removed from their temporary resting place in Fort George to the monument of Queenston Heights, October 13th, 1824, the York Dragoons were represented by Captain Denison.

* The rank of cornet no longer exists in the British service. The word, derived from the French "cor-nette," signified both a standard and a standard-bearer, somewhat as did our word ensign. The rank of cornet was abolished in the Imperial Army August 29th, 1871, but was not abolished in Canada until 1876.

† Dragoons were originally intended to act purely and simply as the mounted infantry lay writers on military subjects are so fond of writing about and theorizing upon in this twentieth century. They were raised and used by Marshal Brissac in 1554, and were classed as heavy or light dragoons, according to the weight of the men, horses and equipment. They were armed with "dragons," short firearms, with barrels only sixteen inches long, which owed their name to the fantastic habit of calling arms after serpents, beasts of prey, etc. From the French name of the weapon, "dragon," came the name "dragoon." The first dragoon regiment in the British service was raised in 1683, and the first light dragoon regiment, now the 15th Hussars, in 1759. These regiments carried short, heavy matchlock muskets and bayonets, though afterwards the lighter fusiil and finally the carbine (in the reign of George I.) was substituted. Dragoons were considered and treated as infantry, and had drums but no colors. (Capt. Ottley L. Perry.)

‡ Raised as dragoons during the reign of George I., 1715; Light Dragoons, 1782; Hussars, 1861.