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RECORD OF THE EIGHTH ROYAL RIFLES,

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"Volens et Valens."

AS the 28th February, 1887, will be the 25th anniversary of the formation of the Eighth Royal Rifles, a short record of the regiment may be interesting to the past as well as present members of the old corps and also to their many friends scattered throughout the Dominion. In consequence of the many events to be chronicled, and the limited space to which a cruel editor restricts me, it will be necessary to make this record somewhat concise, not to say abrupt.

The war declared by England against Russia, in 1854, no doubt awakened the Canadian Government to the fact that complications might possibly arise on this side of the Atlantic, and because the militia was very "sedentary" both in name and nature, a more active force was needed, therefore, on 16th August, 1855, general orders called for the formation of volunteer corps of all arms. Quebec responded with alacrity, for the following corps were gazetted on 31st August:—Quebec field battery, Capt. Gamache, one company garrison artillery, Capt. John Boomer, and one volunteer rifle company, Capt. Charles Corneil. Several other rifle companies, both English and French, were subsequently raised, but from some reason, probably from insufficient encouragement or the great expense they were put to for uniforms, the Government in those days only furnishing arms and accoutrements, there was a gradual disorganization, and on 8th August, 1861, the most of them were disbanded.

As the rebellion was now raging in the United States, this state of things did not last long, for a number of young gentlemen met together and organized the "Victoria Rifles," electing William H. Kerr, Esq., their captain, under whose command the company was, on 30th August, 1861, gazetted as the No. 2 Company Volunteer Militia Rifles of Quebec. The stoppage on the high seas of the British steamer "Trent" by an American man-of-war, and forcibly making prisoners of two of her passengers, Messrs. Mason and Slidell, nearly caused a war between the two countries. This gave an impetus to volunteering all over Canada, and in Quebec the following rifle companies were raised and gazetted, 10th January, 1862:—The Diamond Harbor Rifles, Capt. John Burstall, the "Wellingtons," Capt. James Gillespie, the Ballytrammons, Capt. L. B. Dumlin, and another company by Capt. Thomas Burns. On the 22nd of that month another was added to the list by Capt. Thomas J. Murphy.

These six companies were formed into a battalion and gazetted on 28th February, 1862, as the 8th Battalion Volunteer Militia Rifles of Quebec, with Captain Thomas J. Reeve, late Capt. H. M. 79th Highlanders, as Lieut.-Colonel in command.

The companies were numbered as follows:—

No. 1—"Victorias," Captain Archibald Campbell.

No. 2—Diamond Harbor, Capt. John Burstall.

No. 3—Capt. Thomas Burns.

No. 4—Wellingtons, Capt. James Gillespie, Brevet Lieut.-Col.

No. 5—Ballytrammons, Capt. L. B. Dumlin.

No. 6—Capt. Thos. J. Murphy.