

ANNUAL REPORT ON THE STATE OF
THE MILITIA FOR 1873.

APPENDIX No. 3

(Continued from Page. 411.)

REMARKS OF COMMANDANT OF "B" BATTERY,
ON REPORT OF BOARD

CITADEL, QUEBEC, 30th Jan., 1874.

SIR,—In compliance with your letter, December 23rd, 1873, I beg to submit the following remarks on the rates of fuel and light recommended by the Board of Officers assembled, pursuant to orders, 27th October, 1873.

With all due respect for the Board, as they cannot assimilate the climate of Quebec to that of Ontario, it is a little unfair to assimilate the rates of fuel,—and rather hard upon those quartered in what is generally allowed to be the coldest part of the British Empire to reduce the rate of fuel which, after long experience, has been decided upon as necessary for the Imperial troops, a rate adopted for two years (after due consideration, I presume) by the Militia Department at Ottawa.

I submit that there can scarcely be greater suffering than want of fuel in such an exposed situation as the Citadel of Quebec.

The pay, all ranks, is not sufficient to allow of the purchase of fuel. The allowance hitherto granted to me personally, as a Lieut.-Colonel on the Staff, is in accordance with local regulations for Imperial troops, and granted by the Dominion Government on my acceptance of service under them. It is proposed to reduce it by 20 cords per annum. I beg respectfully to protest against the proposal as an infringement of the terms on which I accepted service under the Dominion Government. I have found the allowance insufficient, and no fuel or oil has ever been surplus, sold, or otherwise made away with in the Citadel of Quebec. On the contrary, officers have had to purchase both fuel and coal oil. It is proposed to reduce the Officers' Mess by 33 cords, and the Sergeant's Mess, 9 cords; but since the report of the Board, the authorized strength has been increased so as to permit, in addition, 10 officers and 10 non-commissioned officers to join for a short course of instruction.

With regard to the 4 Martello Towers, the Board imply that fuel has been drawn for them but not issued. No fuel has ever been drawn for them, except for a short period for one caretaker—a non-commissioned officer of the battery, whom I found it necessary to send to No. 1 Tower, which had been broken into and damaged, stores stolen, &c., by the roughs from Champlain Street; and even after the man in question had been sent there (while at the Citadel on duty), the tower was broken into, and his wife assaulted; pistol bullets were fired through the windows, and the woman was obliged to take refuge in the Citadel. The man himself was also severely beaten, when unarmed and unprepared, by a number of men—so severely as to be admitted into hospital. He was subsequently accidentally killed in firing a salute, and as I had no man available to replace him at the time, and the winter season set in—during which depredations are less common, the tower being rather difficult of access—I left it vacant.

The other towers were, at one time, occupied by civilian caretakers, over whom I could have but little control. They left when it suited them, without notice, taking

away the key, and leaving the interior in a damaged and filthy state, windows broken, and minus a stove in one instance. No. 2 was set on fire to, and considerably damaged when in charge of a civilian caretaker, vide Report dated 12th March, 1872.

The only civilian caretaker at present in charge of No. 2, is a discharged soldier, over whom I thought I could have some little control, but complaints have been made of his conduct; under these circumstances, I thought it advisable to discontinue civilian caretakers, and to estimate for fuel for 4 caretakers from "B" Battery, whom I thought I might be able to send there. It is necessary to have married men in such positions, as a single man finds it difficult to cook, &c.

I have, in my annual report, recommended a few married soldiers of the Royal Artillery being added to the strength of "B" Battery, as caretakers on detachment, as the instruction of 12 months' gunnery is necessarily interfered with on detachment.

The same remarks apply to the caretakers at Levis, Engineer Park and forts. If there was a sufficiently strong detachment to form Gun-drill Squad, the expenses of fuel would not be greater than at present, and the instruction need not be interfered with.

The man living in a cottage (as remarked by the Board) opposite one of the forts, was permitted to do so as a temporary measure, in consequence of the severe illness of his family, rendering it undesirable to order him into the fort, which was damp.

The Board seems to recommend the employment of civilian caretakers, but I have already pointed out the damage done to Government property by civil caretakers not under military control; and I differ from the Board in thinking there is no advantage in having a few trained soldiers in charge of forts, &c.

The Board state the cost of fuel at Levis was \$900, but this amount was greater than need have been, in consequence of the Deputy Adjutant General not being able to obtain sanction for the purchase of fuel until the commencement of the winter. The same remark applies to the purchase of fuel for Quebec every year.

The Board recommends the issue of fuel in spring only for Levis Forts, but in the fall of the year it is equally necessary.

Their recommendation of an officer visiting the forts weekly, has been carried out since the formation of "B" Battery; but the trespasses of cattle, which injures the slopes, and the destruction of fences, to say nothing of the breaking into the forts, which would inevitably take place if the forts, were unoccupied, could not be prevented by a caretaker at Engineer Park, more than 3 miles from No. 3 fort. There is no road between the forts in winter.

I am of opinion that the framers of the General Order (24), 20th October, 1871, providing for the care of the forts by non-commissioned officers and men of "B" Battery, were correct in supposing it the cheapest and most efficient plan. The only difficulty being that the numerical strength of the battery does not allow a sufficient detachment being furnished.

It is to be regretted that the Board did not obtain information from some authentic source before they made the mistake of reporting that the casemate propped up by timber was supported during the occupation of the Imperial troops, and founding an argument upon it, contrary to my assertion, which any unprejudiced person can verify, i.e., that every unoccupied casemate suf-

fered, while those occupied without intermission have not suffered. You have in your possession the report and authority given to me for supporting the casemate in question.

In relying upon their long experience in Canadian casemates, the Board, I presume, allude to Fort Henry, Kingston. I believe that fortress was left in good order, after half a century of occupation by British troops; but a cursory visit of a few hours left me under the impression that in a very short period without occupation, the ruins of Fort Henry would rival those of Quebec.

I beg to enclose copy of return, showing how every man occupying a separate quarter is accounted for; and I am still of opinion it is the cheapest method of preserving the casemates and out-works.

If the bomb proof casemates were once fairly repaired, a wooden roof above the terreplein, such as cover the Towers and the Cavalier in the King's Bastion, and which does not interfere with the drilling at the guns underneath, might, in the long run, be found the cheapest method of preservation.

With regard to the apprehended increase of married soldiers, I beg to submit that I do not encourage marrying, and always inform married soldiers that the Dominion Government acknowledge no claim on their part for fuel, light, or any other indulgence; but I have not been vested with power to prevent men marrying, and can only discharge such, or prove at their wives coming into barracks. At the same time, I have to inform you that the best and steadiest non-commissioned officers and men are married, and a large proportion of such is necessary in a force which has to garrison detached posts, and is no great evil to a stationary corps of Garrison Artillery, in my opinion.

With reference to the Board being informed of an estimate for 51 cords of wood being sent in for the purpose of preventing the water pipes in the Citadel from freezing, &c., I beg to state that the Board are in error; the copy estimate in this office shows only a return for 5 cords and 64 inches have not yet been drawn upon; it being no longer necessary, the pipes having burst the winter pipes for which the above estimate was included were not those alluded to in the report of the Board as being in a Staff-Sergeant's quarters, and in the model room, but are pipes in the ablution room, and in the hospital. In connection with both, there is a pump which has burst from being frozen, and will probably cost more in repairing than 20 times the value of the fuel asked to keep it in order.

The fuel allowed for barrack rooms has been reduced by thirty cords, while the battery has been increased by ten men (short course). The Board recommend sixteen men in each casemate, with a view of saving fuel. Though that number can be put in the rooms, I don't think it advisable on the score of health. Ventilation is always difficult in a casemate, from the fact their being windows in front only; while the men who do not understand the value of fresh air, are always anxious to keep the loop holes tightly closed. I have stated before, I think, it would be preferable on the score of true economy to occupy more casemates rather than crowd the men; and the Medical Officer concurs in this opinion.

Though the contract for wood fuel has been of necessity in French measurement, the issue has for the current year been according to English measure, i.e., one third more than French, in accordance with the