

were they to receive encouragement to do so. This observation is made by the officer commanding the forces :

"I commend this to the serious consideration of the Government. * * * Considering the state of the various corps reported on in this district, it appears to me that it would be desirable that as soon as the 90th Battalion are organised, the whole district should be seen by the general officer commanding."

Now I come to the report which is brought down this Session, the report for the last year, and I find the Deputy Adjutant-General reports that

"On the 1st July last, all the strength of the active militia in the district was nearly 775 men, that the whole number authorised for drill was 380, and that 'the whole of the remaining corps in this district were relieved from drill.'"

"I may here state, says he, that since the commencement of the current year, 1884-85, viz., by *Gazette* of the 13th September last—No. 5 general orders (18)—the three companies of mounted rifles and two companies of infantry in the North-West Territory have been removed from the list of corps of the active militia."

There I have traced the history of these five corps. I have shown you that in 1879 the Government thought it important that they should be organised; I have shown you the military authorities were of the same opinion; I can show you, by a reference to your votes, that a special sum of money was asked for the emergency, for the extra expense involved in organising them; I have shown you how it came about, with what zeal, ardor, enthusiasm, the people of the localities received the proposal, under what happy omens the five corps were started; I have shown you where the signs of disorganisation came in, and how early; I have shown you the repeated monitions and warnings and notices that the hon. gentleman obtained, from year to year, of these difficulties, and the demand for the uniforms, the lack of which prevented the corps from being drilled; I have shown you that the officer pointed out, once and again, and thrice, the discouragement which they were under, that it was not to be expected that the men would drill unless they got uniforms, and he hoped they would get them; and I have shown you that the answer was not uniforms, but an order relieving them from drill until further orders, and in the end the matter culminated after their having been relieved from drill two or three years, in their being taken out of the list of active militia altogether. While that is so, what is the general report of the officer commanding the district? He points out some difficulties which occurred with reference to different corps of the Manitoba force, and he said :

"In lieu of the four last named companies, I would most respectfully recommend that authority be granted me to organise four other companies as follows, viz. :—

Portage la Prairie	1
Brandon, &c	2
Indian Head, or Broadview.....	1

"At all these places there is plenty of good material for that purpose, both of trained officers and men, who are only too anxious to receive permission to organise. (*Vide* my last report above referred to; also, a communication dated 28th April, 1884, and previous communications and enclosures therein referred to)."

I have here to read some portions which apply to Manitoba, but it is because Manitoba and the Territories are mixed by being all in the one military district :

"I have here substituted Portage la Prairie for Regina (from both of which places, however, applications have been received), as the latter, being the headquarters of the Mounted Police, is less in need of protection."

Once again you see the intimate connection between the Mounted Police and the militia force of the country :

"While the former, being now a rapidly growing city, should be entitled to some safeguard against possible incursions of Indians or bands of horse thieves and marauders, with which the country immediately south of the border is well known to be infested, and who might, at any moment, organise successfully a plundering expedition in that direction, without fear of the consequences, owing to the unprotected situation of the settlers in that locality.

"In making this recommendation, I have also in view the advantage which would be derived from the facilities which would thus be afforded

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for the mobilisation of the whole militia force of the district, Portage la Prairie forming, as it were, a connecting link between Brandon, and Winnipeg, and Broadview or Indian Head (whichever, if not both, were selected), between Brandon and Regina; at any of which points a large force could thus be easily assembled in a very short time, to await the reinforcements from the more distant posts.

"I also beg leave to remind you that an application is before you from Mr. S. L. Bedson (see covering letter, dated 1st March, 1884), for authority to raise a corps of mounted rifles in the vicinity of Stony Mountain, of which all the members are in a position to supply their own horses, being composed entirely of young farmers residing in the immediate neighborhood, and who, being all good riders, would constitute a most useful and formidable force, exactly such as would be best adapted to this prairie country. They would be only twelve miles distant from Winnipeg and about forty-five from Portage la Prairie, so could easily be utilised in either direction.

"I would strongly urge the advisability of giving favorable consideration to Mr. Bedson's letter, above referred to; and I even venture to go further, and suggest, with all respect, that another such corps might be easily, and with the greatest advantage to the force of the district, organised at Portage la Prairie, either instead of or in addition to (I should prefer the latter) the infantry corps already recommended in this report. And when it is taken into consideration that three mounted and two infantry corps have recently been disbanded in the North-West Territory, and replaced by Mounted Police."

Once again you see the intimate and inevitable connection between the two questions :

"I have reason to hope that, should my recommendation in this matter meet with the approval and concurrence of the Major-General commanding, the Hon. Minister of Militia may be induced to take a similar view of the matter, and, recognising the invaluable utility of such a force, in the event of any such contingencies arising, at any time, as those previously herein referred to, sanction these organisations last mentioned, and empower me to proceed with the formation of these new corps at as early a date as possible, so as, if they are to be formed at all, they may be in a position to prove their capabilities of enrolment before the opening of the ensuing drill season."

Then, after a statement of the geographical condition of the country, and the means of communication, he continues :

"Such being the case, what force have we, as at present constituted, to oppose to such intruders?"

"I answer, on a frontier of 1,260 miles, namely from Lake Superior to the Rocky Mountains, only 400 militiamen, all told, with, perhaps, an equal number of Mounted Police, that could be made available for this purpose within any reasonable time; in the winter season, particularly, when the forces at Battleford, Carlton and Prince Albert, may be fairly considered as out of the field for all practical purposes.

"Since writing my report for 1883 I notice that circumstances occurred which at one time threatened to but too fully verify my forebodings of danger in the near future, even from within ourselves (*Vide* 2nd paragraph of report, page 58).

"Fortunately, this catastrophe was averted by the excellent management of Major Crozier, Superintendent of Mounted Police, and the steadiness and discipline of the men under his command. I allude, of course, to the Battleford *fracas* with the Indians in the early part of last summer. Having already, however, reported to you fully with regard to the impressions formed by me when travelling through that section of country last July (see report of 28th July), I must not here repeat my views therein expressed, and which have not since altered."

More than once have I, as persuasively as I could, called upon the Minister of Militia to produce that report of the 28th July, and it is important, now that we are dealing with the question of the defence of this country, with a proposal to expend half a million dollars a year in a force more military than civil, after all, that we should understand the report of the officer as to the condition of the country, as to impressions formed when travelling throughout that country last July, with reference to that very subject of defence; but, for some reason or the other, we cannot get it. In the discussion in this House last Session on the subject of the militia, when the hon. gentleman in Supply was asking for his vote, my hon. friend from Marquette (Mr. Watson) said this :

"I would ask the hon gentleman if it is the intention to establish any more volunteer battalions in the North-West. There are several towns in Manitoba where there might be good companies organised. I should like to know if it is the intention to furnish them with accoutrements as soon as they are ready to organise."

The Minister of Militia said this :

"The organisation of the volunteer force in Manitoba and the North-West is a very large question. It has been, and still is, engaging the attention of the Department. Under the estimates as they now exist, it would be impossible to get anything like a proper organisation in that district; but the battalion which has just been provided for is the