

NOTES ON THE DEFENCE OF CANADA.

No. I.

Lieut.-Col. Jervois, R. E., has submitted a report on the defence of Canada to the imperial authorities, which he proposes to accomplish by a single line of fortified posts, stretching from Quebec to Hamilton, a distance of 548 miles. The positions selected are Quebec, Montreal, Kingston, Toronto, Hamilton, respectively 168, 172, 161, and 46 miles apart, the last station being nearly 35 miles from the frontier at Suspension Bridge.

This plan involves, by implication, the abandonment of the frontier south of the St. Lawrence, from the line of 45 N. L., at St. Regis, and does not provide any means to cover the line of the proposed Intercolonial Railway. Apart from these perhaps intentional omissions in a published report of a military project, the scheme is a true one; but as a deficiency exists at its eastern flank, another—probably due to the same cause—is apparent on the northwestern flank of so serious a character as to imperil the safety of the whole.

A glance at a map of North America will satisfy any observer that Lake Michigan is one of the most splendid naval basins in the world. Absolutely commanded by the almost impregnable position on the island in the Straits of Mackinaw, which connect it with Lake Huron, and having access to the Mississippi river by the Illinois Canal and the railways centering at Chicago, it is entirely independent of the eastern and southeastern States of the Federal Union for its value as a station of offence or defence. The resources at the disposal of those who hold this lake are such as to make it a matter of imperative necessity on the part of those who undertake the defence of Canada to establish, as a counterpoise, a naval depot and military station on Lake Huron, in such a position as will compel any force concentrated in Lake Michigan to look to their own safety and the defence of their own coasts. It will be necessary that the position selected should command the resources of Central Canada and the communications with the sea without reference to the line of the St. Lawrence above Montreal, and that such communications would remain untouched in the event of a reverse on Lake Ontario. Such a position exists at the mouth of French River, and its communications can be kept open by way of the Ottawa River in the manner described in the accompanying memoranda.

A strong naval force on Lake Ontario would secure the frontier from St. Regis to the mouth of Niagara River. It has been stated that the line of the Welland Canal is not defensible. This is a mistake. There are good military positions at Niagara, Chippewa and Fort Erie, which could be held by a small force, covered with field works, against almost any force, as long as naval supremacy on the lakes was maintained. From Fort Erie to Amherstburgh, Port Colborne, Port Maitland, Port Stanley and New Glasgow should be occupied by detachments according to their importance, and defended by field works. Amherstburgh and Windsor would require strong detachments to command the Detroit River, and Chatham, on the Thames, must be occupied by a respectable force. Walpole Island and Sarnia should each be fortified to secure St. Clair River, and cover the right flank of the first line of defence. Goderich must be held to cover the Buffalo and Lake Huron Railway, and Collingwood and Penetanguishine to cover the right flank of the second line, and the key of the defence of the Western Province at Toronto. Without a strong naval depot and military force at French

River, it would be impossible to prevent the occupation of Collingwood and Penetanguishine, by which the position at Toronto would be taken in reverse, and the whole line of posts uncovered. It will not meet the circumstances of the case to place this proposed depot at Collingwood or Penetanguishine, because the lines of communication would be through Toronto, and in the event of a reverse or indecisive action on Lake Ontario, their usefulness would be paralyzed. The post at French River would compel the people of the Federal States to look to the safety of their own coast lines, prevent them taking the initiative in any manner, and throw them altogether on the defensive. If well managed, it would hermetically seal up Lake Michigan, and a naval reverse there would be productive of no permanent results, as an impregnable position, easily defensible, would afford ample opportunity to retreat and equip. Under these circumstances, the only thing to guard against would be a sudden raid, and therefore it would not be necessary to erect permanent works at the points indicated. This measure would only leave one vulnerable point on the Western frontier, and that would be from the mouth of the Niagara River to the Falls. The details of the plan of defence in this case would be as follows. Hamilton, London, Sarnia the second line, whose covering points would be St. Catharines, Niagara, Thorold, Chippewa, Fort Erie, Port Colborne, Port Maitland, Port Stanley, Port Glasgow, Amherstburgh, Windsor, Chatham and Walpole Island. Goderich covers the rear of Sarnia and London, and protects the railway junctions at Stratford and St. Mary's. Port Glasgow approaches within 12 miles of the Great Western Railway at Wardsville, midway between London and Chatham. Port Stanley is the Port of London. Chatham must be held to cover Windsor and Amherstburgh, as well as the Great Western Railway. The country around is in a great degree impenetrable, being covered with the swamps of the St. Clair flats, yet Proctor suffered a disgraceful defeat 15 miles above the village in 1813, because he did not take the common precaution of erecting breastworks, and arming them with a couple of field pieces. The river is navigable for boats to that distance. The right flank and rear of both lines would be covered by the depot at French River, and the communications of Toronto, on the left flank, with Quebec would be by way of the St. Lawrence, while the right would be by way of the Ottawa.

As this system would leave only one vulnerable point on the western frontier, so the maintenance of both lines would reduce the southeastern frontier to a similar condition, because the seizure of Fort Montgomery, on the Mississippi, a strongly entrenched camp at Rouse's Point, and a fortified position at Lennoxville, would effectually cover the southern frontier, without being compelled to fall back on the St. Lawrence; for it is evident that if Portland was threatened or occupied, no force could be spared or would attempt a repetition of Montgomery's trick in 1775 by the Kenebec and Chaudiere rivers.

Below Toronto, the defence of Central and Lower Canada to Montreal is maintained by the two lines of the St. Lawrence and the Ottawa, containing on the first Whitty, Port Hope, Cobourg, Kingston, which is connected with the second line by the Rideau Canal; Brockville, connected with Ottawa by railway, Prescott, Cornwall, Montreal, on the second; Ottawa, as a place of arms, and for the assembling of the military reserves.

It would appear that the only place necessary to cover with heavy permanent works would be Quebec. Modern science, as applied to artillery, has rendered any system of defence not largely composed of earthworks useless. It would seem, therefore, that Canadian fortifications should cost a comparatively small sum, because they could be constructed by the troops, and should be undertaken as a part of their training

The estimated number of men and guns for a full system of defence, as sketched out, would be as follows:—Second Line, Hamilton 10,000 men, London and St. Mary's 25,000 men; Port Sarnia 10,000 men. First Line and Covering posts—Niagara 2,500, Chippewa 2,500, Fort Erie 2,500; St. Catharines 2,500; Thorold 1,500; Port Colborne 1,500; Port Maitland 1,500, Port Stanley 2,500, Port Glasgow 750, Amherstburgh 1,500; Windsor 1,500; Chatham 3,000; Walpole Island 2,500; total of First Line 70,250 men. Third Line—Toronto 20,000; Collingwood and Goderich 10,000; Penetanguishine 2,500; French River 15,000; total for Second Line 47,500 men; whole force for Western Province 117,750 men. First Line below Toronto—Whitty 750 men; Port Hope 750; Cobourg 750; Kingston 25,000; Brockville 1,500; Prescott 1,500; Cornwall 750. Rouse's Point 45,000; Lennoxville 15,000; total 91,000 men. Second Line—Ottawa army of reserve 50,000 men; Montreal 15,000; total 65,000 men; total for defence of Lower Province 165,000 men, not including Quebec; total for both Provinces, 273,750 men.

The Imperial Government would probably supply 25,000 men of this force; 10,000 would be required for Quebec; 7,500 for Montreal; 5,000 for Kingston, and 2,500 Toronto—this would make a total force in the Province of 299,750 men.

Great Britain should find the naval force, which ought to be 18 first-class iron-plated gun-boats in Lake Huron, with 2,500 seamen and marines; 16 on Lake Ontario, 2,000 seamen and marines, and 3,000 of a naval reserve, 1,000 at Kingston and 2,000 at French River, which should be called Victoria. The Province should encourage the training and organization of an Artillery force of which we should have at hand 12,000 men and 12,000 engineers trained as artillery men. An armament of 30 pieces, siege and heavy artillery, is requisite at Hamilton, a park of 100 pieces at London, 30 at Sarnia, 10 at Niagara, 10 at Chippewa, 10 at Fort Erie, 10 at Thorold, 10 at St. Catharines, 10 at Port Colborne, 10 at Port Maitland, 20 at Port Stanley, 3 at Port Glasgow, 10 at Amherstburgh, 10 at Windsor, 20 at Chatham, 20 at Walpole Island, total 1st line 323 guns of position. Second Line—Toronto 50 pieces, Collingwood 50 pieces, Penetanguishine 20 pieces, French River 40; total 160 guns of position. Western Canada requires 480 guns. Below Toronto—Whitty 3 guns, Port Hope 3, Cobourg 3, Kingston 100 guns, Brockville 5, Prescott 5, Cornwall 5, Rouse's Point 150, Lennoxville 20; total 294 guns of position; Ottawa 220 guns in Park, Montreal 80 guns in position; total 300; grand total 1,077 pieces of heavy artillery.

The Province requires for effective defence 299,750 men—of all arms; 34 first-class gun-boats; 7,500 seamen and marines; 1,077 guns of position; 290 field batteries, of six guns each, and 7,000 horses.

An estimate of cost would be, for arms and clothing—say for 370,000 men, at \$50 each—\$13,500,000; guns of position at \$500—\$538,500; field artillery—\$10,000 each battery—\$2,900,000; horses at \$150—1,050,000, ammunition for two years for whole force—say \$4,000,000, hospital stores and equipment—\$100,000. total cost \$22,088,500. No estimate for cost of fortifications is made—all that is necessary could be done by the troops, and with trivial exceptions should consist of field works. The experience afforded by the war now waging in the States is against employing permanent fortifications for defence. In our case it would prove a permanent expense and a standing army, which the Province cannot support.

Ottawa, March 21st, 1865.

The preceding notes were written for the purpose of disabusing the public mind of an idea which the enemies of these Provinces had sedulously fostered, and which was taken up by the political economists of the Manchester School as one of their most powerful arguments