

SENIOR MILITIA OFFICERS GATHERED AT OTTAWA



Col. J. MASON

Col. CROWE

General COTTON

General OTTER

Col. HUGHES
Minister of Militia

General MacKENZIE

THE MILITIA CONFERENCE

By JOHN A. COOPER

COLONEL SAM. HUGHES, Minister of Militia, has created something of a sensation in militia circles by summoning to Ottawa about one hundred and fifty of the most active senior officers. For three days, November 16th to 18th, these citizen soldiers discussed all sorts of topics looking to the improvement of the militia as a defence force. No missionary or religious conference could have been more earnest or sincere. Every meeting was well attended, the closest attention was paid to all the discussions, and a magnificent spirit was shown. Besides meeting together as a whole, the conference was divided into sections, each discussing its own problems and each making separate recommendations.

While there were twenty-three subjects on the programme, the greatest amount of discussion occurred on three or four. The chief aim was to discover how to keep the militia popular and efficient and many valuable suggestions were made which will no doubt be examined by the authorities in due course. Some of these suggestions were technical, but some were of considerable interest to the general public. The latter will be dealt with here in order of their seeming importance.

Rates of Pay.

CAVALRY section recommended 75 cents a day for first year, 95 cents for second, and \$1.00 for third; with 25 cents a day for musketry efficiency. Pay of horses, \$1.50 a day. Maximum indemnity for horses \$200.

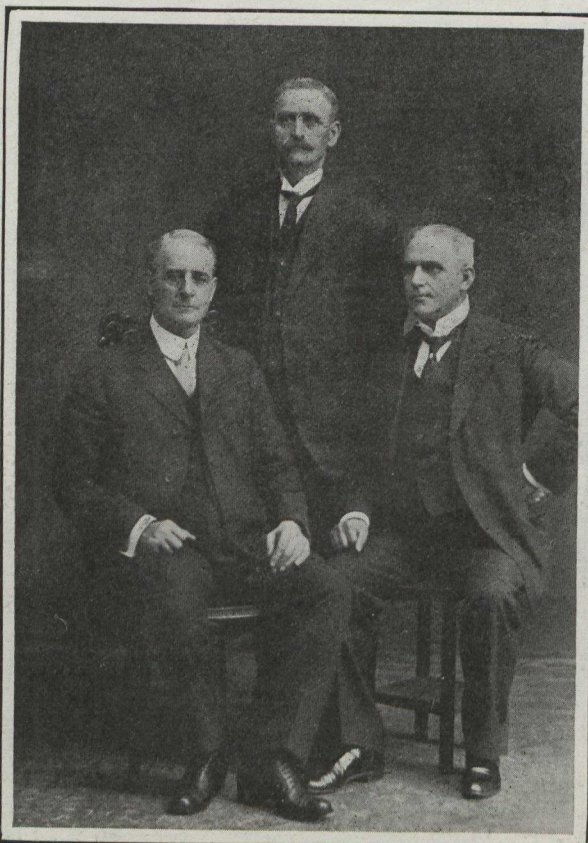
Artillery section recommended that the rate of efficiency pay should be increased and "specialists and higher pay" should be available for expertness. Pay of horses \$1.50 a day. Maximum indemnity for horses, full value of animal.

Infantry section recommended a minimum of \$1.00 per day plus an allowance for good conduct and efficiency in shooting.

This was one of the big questions of the meeting. Every section was in favour of increased pay, although none demanded it. It was recognized that

it would be difficult for the Government to persuade Parliament that the increase was necessary and advisable. The demand for increased pay came

A MILITARY FAMILY

Lieut.-Col. JOHN HUGHES
9th Infantry BrigadeInspector JAMES L. HUGHES Col. SAM HUGHES
Hon. Col. Toronto Public School Cadets Minister of Militia

from the rural corps rather than city regiments. The latter drill at home in the evenings and the men do not lose wages because of attendance at parade. The country regiments, on the other hand, go to camp each year and the men lose their wages while they are away; consequently it seems necessary to make up at least fifty per cent. of this loss. The present rate of fifty cents a day should therefore be doubled.

Opinion in the conference was divided on the question. If time had permitted there would have been alternative suggestions. For example, the rural battalions might be drilled at local headquarters for two years and then go to camp on the third year. Under such circumstances, 50 cents a day would suffice for local drill and one dollar a day for central camp drill. All corps would thus draw only the maximum pay when they go to camp. This would not mean a great increase in the total annual cost. It would amount to perhaps \$100,000 a year as against \$275,000 were all paid a dollar a day.

Again there were a number present who were wholly opposed to an increase of pay. In the city regiments, no man draws his pay, the whole being funded for regimental and company purposes. In the rural corps, each man draws his pay individually and there are no general funds. Those opposed to the increase in pay expressed the opinion that the rural officers and men should follow the city custom and serve free, funding their earnings for regimental and company purposes. They pointed out that the man who possesses insufficient patriotism to drill twelve days a year for three years is not worth much as a citizen, and that under voluntary service of this kind better men would be secured.

There seems to be something in this contention. Country regiments are too often filled up with a class of men who are not very desirable, are not permanent residents of the district and who are not likely to be an asset to the state in the event of war. It is difficult to see, as many of the officers pointed out privately, how an increase in pay would make any improvement. There must be a reform of a broader and deeper kind. One officer went so far as to suggest to the writer that if the country regiments are not willing to serve as the city regiments do, they might just as well be disbanded. A militia