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THE NEW ADJUTANT-GENERAL.



OME fifteen years ago I was in charge of a company in one of the best rural corps in Canada in camp in London. We were all very green. It was before the days of the infantry schools, and officers did not know as much as they do now. We made many mistakes, no doubt. The commandant of the camp cursed us on parade for our ignorance, but never by any chance did he correct mistakes. If he had known his own work we would not have minded, but he did not. Many of his brigade commands belonged to the drill book twenty-five years ago. We did not respect him. We all hated and despised him. The brigade-major was a very different man. He made no mistakes in drill. When any of us did, he quietly told us the right way to do things. After parade he would often stroll round and make suggestions. He knew how to handle us. It was a pleasure to serve under him.

I did not see him again for many years. We were riding together following a battalion skirmishing. Some companies wore new tunics, while those of many others showed signs of wear. He remarked that some officers always wanted their men in new tunics. For himself he preferred a uniform that had seen long service. It was not only more honorable, but for the militia the idea was more economical.

The officer referred to was Col. Aylmer, the new adjutant-general. These two experiences show that he possesses the most necessary characteristics for a man in that position—tact and common sense. He will require much tact to handle the many different men with whom he will have business, and he will require common sense to counteract the strong tendency to red-tapeism which almost invariably surrounds important and influential departmental officials and makes them forget that they are the servants—not the masters—of the public. The late adjutant-general was an ideal officer in this respect.

Col. the Hon. Matthew Aylmer is the eldest son of the Right Hon. Lord Aylmer, seventh Baron of Balrath, and the daughter of Edward Journeaux, Esq., of Jersey, Channel Islands.

He was born at Melbourne, in the county of Richmond, province of Quebec, and educated at the High School, Montreal, St. Francis College, and at Trinity College, Dublin.

In 1864 he joined as ensign Her Majesty's 7th Royal Fusiliers (City of London regiment), then quartered at Malta, was promoted lieutenant in 1868, and served with his regiment in the Mediterranean, Canada and England.

He retired from the Imperial service in 1870 and joined the staff of the Militia of Canada in 1871, in which he served as district paymaster Military District No. 5, brigade-major of the same district and of No. 1, commanding that district for 18 months, and became commanding officer of Military District No. 4, with appointment of assistant adjutant-general at Headquarters, until finally promoted colonel on appointment to adjutant-generalship, the highest military position open to soldiers in the service of the Dominion.

Col. Aylmer served with his regiment, the 7th Royal Fusiliers, through the first Fenian raid on the Eastern Township frontier in 1866, and was present with them at St. Armande and Pigeon Hill, and later, while on leave from his regiment, he was attached, during the second Fenian raid in 1870, as adjutant, to the 54th Richmond Battalion Canadian Militia, at that time commanded by his father, Lord Aylmer.

What is perhaps more to our interest, however, he is heart and soul a Canadian, and will spare no efforts to promote the efficiency of the Canadian Militia and also at the same time deal with it, as far as his position admits, with the strictest justice; and no Canadian can ask more. He is a fearless rider, a lover of all sports and a genial and pleasant companion.

With Gen. Gascoigne in command, Col. Aylmer as adjutant general, and an officer of Col. Lake's ability as quarter-master general, the militia may look forward to a period of efficiency and prosperity, provided that the country is ready to assist the Government in granting the funds necessary to place it on a thoroughly firm basis, and that the Department will be conducted on purely independent lines.