

THE FLYING CAMP OF 1649.

BY BENJAMIN SULTÉ, OTTAWA.



ONTREAL. Antiquarians have lately discussed the following historical point: What is the first militia force to be found in the records of Canada?

I may venture to answer that as early as 1642 there were no less than seventy soldiers at Three Rivers, whose duty was not only to defend that place against the Iroquois, but to patrol on Lake St. Peter also. The same year only fifteen soldiers were quartered at Quebec—a much less exposed station than Three Rivers.

In the year 1644 some troops were sent to Canada by Anne d'Autriche, Régente de France. Twenty-two of these soldiers accompanied the Hurons, the missionaries and a few Frenchmen who went to the Georgian Bay that summer.

M. Ferland says that the garrison of Montreal numbered thirty men in 1647; but he evidently means the thirty men placed under the orders of Jean Bourdon for reconnaissance purposes on Lake St. Peter.

Up to now I have only found mention of "soldiers"—apparently regular troops.

About 1647, M. de Montmagny had under consideration a project for organizing an active militia force composed of men who kept a constant lookout at the places where the Iroquois were in the habit of making attacks to plunder and murder the settlers. The resources at his disposal did not permit the Governor to bring this plan into operation.

I find that in 1648 soldiers are mentioned as being garrisoned at Three Rivers. It is stated that in the same year no less than five hundred soldiers were scattered from