

## Military Montreal in the Sixties

The uniforms of the Royal Canadian Regiment now to be seen daily on our streets, are a visible mark that Montreal is once again a garrison city, and a reminder to those of an older generation of the anxiety which was felt throughout this country when in 1862 Mason and Slidell were forcibly taken off the British steamer Trent by the American navy; an illegal act which threatened to result in war between the United States and Great Britain. This anxiety was only relieved when British troops reached our shores to garrison the various points which were most vulnerable to attack from the United States.

In 1862 Montreal's garrison was composed of a detachment of the Imperial Garrison Artillery, and the headquarters of the Royal Canadian Rifle Regiment, who occupied the Quebec Gate Barracks, which had been vacated by the 39th Regiment, now the Dorsetshire Regiment, a short time previously on their return to England.

### HOUSING THE TROOPS

So threatening were the conditions between the two countries that troops were sent to Montreal before proper provision had been made for barrack accommodation, and some of the regiments were compelled to go under canvas on Logan's farm, now Lafontaine Park. It was not long, however, until Molson's College, on St. Mary and Voltigeurs streets, the Jesuits' College, on College street, west of McGill, and the stone block on the north-east corner of St. Paul and St. Sulpice streets, were transformed into barracks and occupied by some of the crack corps of the British army. A new gun shed was erected for the field artillery on the eastern parade ground of the Quebec Gate Barracks—which then covered the large block of land bounded by Water, St. Paul, Barrack and Lacroix streets—the ground floor being used as a gun shed, and the first floor as a barrack room; the latter must have been very cold in winter. Buildings on the Lacroix street side were converted into stables, with barrack rooms above, which, for sanitary reasons, would not be tolerated in the present day. Buildings were erected on St. Mary street, in the vicinity of Marlborough street, for the accommodation of the military train and for field artillery, and a building on the north side of St. Mary street, near the corner of Marlborough, was used as a military prison.

### ARMY SERVICE CORPS

The Military Train, now termed the Army Service Corps, had a great attraction for the youth of those days, not only for their natty uniforms, which were much the same as the cavalry of the line, but owing to the corps being equipped with mules, an animal then unknown to the youth of Montreal. The patient, sure-footed animals, with their long-flapping ears, and outrageous bray were admired by all as they drew the grey-colored wagons of the Imperial army through our streets when supplying stores to the different barracks. When the corps was on a route march the rattle of harness, chains, and the rhythm of hoof beats, as they passed through our streets, some of which were then paved with cobblestones, made a jingle that caused the boys of that day to be fired with the ambition to be a soldier. When the Military Train left Montreal their mules were sold; many of them being