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THE INVASION OF CANADA IN 1874.

WRITTEN IN 1900 BY A RETIRED MILITIAMAN.

The winter of 1873-4 has passed sadly enough. The Canadian people were full of misgivings. The Russo-French combination against Prussia, resulted in the evacuation of the Rhenish provinces, and although the German nation were confident of the ultimate result, yet Austria's undefined position caused some anxiety. The revolt in India had assumed formidable proportions; but the mutineers were everywhere held in check by our Forces. In Egypt the Khedive after sustaining a series of defeats from the Turkish army had obtained such assistance in money and arms from the Americans, (under the pretext that it was a war of independence) as to enable him to turn the tide of war, and in turn to press the Turkish Troops. Early in the spring of 1874 a naval victory gave the Russians the possession of the Baltic, and preparations on a large scale were made for the invasion of Prussia from the north; grown careless by success, or perhaps with the intonation of drawing England into the contest, the integrity of Belgium was violated, and a conflict occurred between a portion of the French Troops, and the Belgian Frontier Guard, The Radical Government of England having been defeated on the Washington Treaty, had given place to a conservative administration, and the new Government, without hesitation, demanded from France an *amende* for the act. In this remonstrance England was joined by Holland.

After some delay, this was refused, on some trivial pretext; and another violation occurring, (they say secretly provoked by Prussia) with the overhauling of an English steamer in the Mediterranean by a Russian frigate; England declared war, and sent an army into Belgium to co operate with the Belgians and Dutch. Simultaneously with England's declaration of War, Russia took possession of the Blacksea, and invaded Turkey. This necessitated sending an army to the assistance of the Sultan and the King of Italy, who had long chafed at being out of the fight, again declared himself England's ally.

The Yankees profiting by their adage "that England's embarrassment was America's opportunity" sent out a number of privateers, ostensibly under French colors, but in reality leaving American ports, and armed and manned by Americans. One of these being captured by an English gun-boat, and it having been proved that its papers were forged, that it had not touched at a French post, and that its officers and crew were all Americans or Irish, the captain, pilot, and three seamen were hanged at the yard arm as pirates. This caused a remonstrance from the U. S. Government; but the English Government while deprecating the zeal of their officer, refused to apologise. Upon this the U. S. Government declared war on the 7th of June 1874. Pending the negotiations, which resulted in war being declared, the Imperial Government secretly advised the Dominion Government that arrangements were in progress by which Independence could be granted to Canada, thus absolving her from the necessity of bearing the brunt of the war. While this was discussing, the arrogance of the United States Government surpassed its discretion, and they loudly announced their intention of occupying Canada, independent or otherwise. This fired the spirit of the Canadian people; and with the exception of a mercantile clique in Montreal, and a few scattered sympathizers through the country, they boldly announced their intention of retaining their British connection, and abiding the consequence. Britain's other colonies did nobly also. Australia sent 25,000 volunteers to India, and 5,000 men went from the Cape of Good Hope and Natal to the same place; thus giving the disposal of the bulk of the army to the British Government for other purposes. Ireland too, finding there was a chance of fighting elsewhere, gave up doing so at home. All the line Regiments were full; and many Militia, and some Volunteer regiments had volunteered for foreign service. But it is not with this, that I have to do; we Canadians speedily found something at home to occupy us; and after the distracting anxieties, and depression of trade, for we past nine months, the activity of preparation for war was almost a relief.

The six weeks hiatus between the diplomatic correspondence and the declaration of war, had not been lost; and on ascertaining our position England nobly seconded our efforts. With a well devised policy 10,000 men, consisting principally of the Regiments that had last been in the colony, were sent as under the command of a Lieutenant-General and two Major-Generals. A Major-General was appointed, with a suitable staff, to the command of the maritime Provinces.

As regards our local Forces; the thorough organization inaugurated in 1871 had been carried out. The Volunteers in the several districts had been brigaded, and were furnished with Brigade and Division staffs.

Each Division had been rendered independent in the matter of camp equipage and field equipment. A transport service had been organized, and arrangements perfected for the carriage either of troops or provisions. The artillery had been considerably augmented, and by a lengthened period of drill, and the training effected in the schools of Gunnery, were fairly efficient. The proportions of cavalry (or mounted riflemen) and infantry, had been adjusted; to each Division. Preparations had been made for the establishment of a manufactory for small arms ammunition, but, unfortunately, this had been too long delayed, and the arrangements were not completed. But so far the organization of the small Canadian army was complete, and indeed by a liberal system of rewards for good conduct and marksmanship, exemptions from civil duties and a grant of land for continued good service; the several corps were filled with hardy and energetic young men, enthusiastic in their profession, and looked upon with pride as the National Guard of the country.

These changes had been brought about partly by an alteration in the Militia Law, making the Active Militia the constitutional force of the country, in which every able bodied man was obliged to serve, imposing a direct tax upon those not actually serving; and partly by the liberal grants made for the purpose by the Dominion Legislature, upon whom the shadow of war had exercised the same effect in loosing the purse-strings as in former years; and with whom no present sub-