

Annual Report on the State of the Militia for 1875.

(Continued from page 232.)

APPENDIX No. 1.

MILITARY DISTRICT NO. 12.

HEAD QUARTERS, CHARLOTTETOWN.

20th November, 1875.

SIR,—In transmitting the accompanying Inspection Report, I have the honor to state for the information of the Major General Commanding, that in accordance with your instructions of the 23rd April last, I immediately proceeded to call for Volunteers for the purpose of enrolling the quota of Active Militia required in this district; but as these instructions arrived simultaneously with the issue of the General Order of the same date prescribing the annual drill of the Militia of the Dominion, I was met with much hesitation on the part of the population in coming forward to volunteer, the employers in the towns intimating to the young men in their service that they would be discharged if absent from their engagements for twelve days in camp, while in the rural districts the inhabitants being chiefly small landholders, much distaste was expressed at the prospects of having to leave their farms and live stock for so many days without their oversight. While endeavoring to overcome these obstacles the timely visit of the Major General Commanding, and his permission being given for the drills to be performed for this year at Company head quarters, enabled me to complete the service rolls without much further delay.

The localities determined on by the Major General for the head quarters of the several companies are without doubt the very best which could be selected; in King's County the four seaports of Georgetown, Montague, Souris, and St. Peter's have each the advantage of one company; and in Prince County the harbors of Summerside, Alberton, Port Hill, and Tryon, have a similar number, and I have been assured by many of the residents in these counties that they viewed with much gratification the action of the Government in affording them this very desirable and much need protection, particularly in harbors where so many as three hundred sail of foreign fishing vessels have congregated at the same time, and the landing of some hundreds of their crew keeping the inhabitants in fear and anxiety for days together. In Queen's County the head quarters of five companies are within two miles of the City of Charlottetown, and immediately available for any duty required, while the remaining three companies are judiciously posted at Crapaud, Wheatley River, and Strathalbyn.

The King's County Provisional Battalion being the first to complete the annual drill I commenced my inspection on the 30th August, and considering the very short time since their enrolment I had reason to be satisfied with both officers and men; Capt. Owen, commanding the Georgetown Battery of Garrison Artillery, is an attentive good officer and I would strongly recommend his being supplied with two nine pounder guns for the service of his fine battery; for as the drill shed in town has been lately put in fair repair there is every facility for his instructing his men during the winter season. Major MacDonald commanding this battalion has provided a good six hundred yard range and

erected Butts thereon at his head quarters, he has shewn himself most zealous in the organization and drill of the several companies.

I next inspected in September the Prince County Provisional Battalion. There was considerable difficulty in enrolling any company in Summerside, but owing to the indefatigable exertions of the Lieut. Colonel Hunter Duvar a battery of Garrison Artillery has been raised and performed the annual drill under command of Acting Captain Bethune, the two officers who were gazetted to this battery having resigned at the commencement of the drill. I would recommend that this Battery be also supplied with two nine pounder guns, there being a good drill shed in the city now in course of construction. The three companies of this Battalion are a fine body of men, well commanded, with much future promise.

In Charlottetown the first Battery of Garrison Artillery under Major Pollard, which has been very much benefited by the supervision of Lieutenant Colonel McGill commanding the Queen's County Provisional Battalion, finished the annual drill, on the ninth instant, and I inspected it the following day. Having had the advantage of preliminary instruction prior to the commencement of the twelve days, annual drill, their performance on parade shewed a proficiency far in advance of what could have been otherwise looked for and proves how much may be accomplished by a little extra zeal on the part of both officers and men.

As there is an excellent drill shed with gas lights at his service Major Pollard promises to instruct his Battery in heavy gun drill during the winter. The Queen's County Provisional Battalion on the representation of its commanding officer was relieved from the performance of the annual drill by your authority of 31st August; the companies have not yet been supplied with arms, clothing or equipment, which await the requisition of the officer commanding.

The 2nd Battery of the Charlottetown Garrison Artillery under command of Major Morris, and the Charlottetown Provisional Battalion under command of Lieut. Colonel Beer, having deferred the annual drill until the end of September had only commenced when the order arrived for the suspension of all drill from the 27th September to the 23rd October; since the latter date the drills have been resumed and I am informed will be completed on or before the first proximo.

A Provincial Rifle Association has been organized this autumn under the influence and direction of Lieut. Colonel Rankin of the late local Militia, an officer of experience and sound judgment. The first meeting of the Association was held at Kensington on the first and second of October when upwards of one hundred and fifty of the Active Militia attended to compete for the prizes; with the liberal assistance of the general Government and the subscriptions from the members there is every reason to expect the Association will prosper, and it may be confidently anticipated that excellent results will follow the opportunity thus afforded both to officers and men to prove their skill in the use of their fine weapons at the annual meetings.

The quota of Active Militia now in this District consists of

No. 1. Charlottetown Battery Garrison Artillery Major Pollard—officers 3; non commissioned officers and men 40.

Georgetown Battery Garrison Artillery Captain Owen—officers 2; non commissioned officers and men 40.

No. 2 Charlottetown Battery Garrison Ar-

tillery Major Morris—officers 3; non commissioned officers and men 40.

Summerside Battery Garrison Artillery Acting Captain Bethune—officers 2; non commissioned officers and men 40.

Queen's County Provisional Battalion Lt. Colonel McGill—officers 10; non commissioned officers and men 120.

King's County Provisional Battalion Major MacDonald—officers 13; non commissioned officers and men 120.

Charlottetown Provisional Battalion Lieut. Colonel Beer—officers 12; non commissioned officers and men 120.

Prince County Provisional Battalion Lt. Col. Hunter Duvar—officers 9; non commissioned officers and men 120.

Total officers 54; non commissioned officers and men 640.

I have the honor to be, Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

JOHN HAMILTON GRAY, Lt. Col.

Deputy Adjutant General,

Commanding Military District No. 12.

To the Adjutant General,

Head Quarters, Ottawa.

Our Unarmoured Navy.

The importance of unarmoured vessels as ships of war is increasing day by day. Their value and necessity are, and have been for years, admitted, but not to the extent which is justifiable. Ironclad construction has engrossed public attention, if not to the exclusion, at all events to the detriment, of unarmoured construction. It has been felt that, whatever principles may be adopted in building vessels for subordinate purposes in the Royal Navy, and whatever number it may be thought fit to keep or destroy, our most important concern was to see that our ironclads were not neglected, and that in regard to ironclad construction, we kept ourselves ahead of the other navies of the world. The loss of the *Vanguard*, amongst other benefits it has conferred, has created not only a profound sense of insecurity in regard to these ironclads, but it has also brought, incidentally, into prominence the questionable policy of confining the construction of men of war to them. This is, of course, purely an accident, so far as the *Vanguard* is concerned. Other causes have nevertheless contributed to emphasise the necessity of increasing our unarmoured fleet; the chief being the rapidly increasing power of artillery. So long as it was possible, without serious difficulty, to build ships with shot-proof armour, the value, and, indeed, the necessity, or rather, we should say, the unquestionable superiority, of ironclad construction was unassailable.

Now, however, while the necessity still exists—but the unquestionable superiority is doubtful—the argument in favor of unarmoured construction increases in strength every day. What has been found, practically, is that ironclads capable of carrying or defying modern artillery are limited in their construction to the service of coast defence. To accept this fact with contentment, and to go on confining our shipbuilding policy to the construction of heavy ironclads, is to accept the view that our Navy must be satisfied to retain the power of defence, but to discard all serious thought of offence. Thus, by confining our attention to ironclad construction, we should find we had, no doubt, acquired a powerful, possibly an impregnable, means of coast defence, but had gradually impoverished, if not paralysed, our power afloat by neglecting to provide properly for the decay of impotence of our unarmoured ships. We do not, in saying this, disregard