

man denied that it led to an increase of numbers; he said it led to a diminution of numbers, but he agreed that we ought to take up the formation of local corps. I want to point out that the policy of the formation of local corps, which was assented to formally by the hon. gentleman in 1882, had really been adopted by the Government in 1879, and that it had progressed a certain distance at that time; and I want to point out that, instead of dealing with the North-West in the spirit of the preceding occurrences and in the spirit which he indicated in that debate, he dealt with this subject in an altogether different spirit; and this subject, intimately connected as the two parts of it are—the defence and security of the North-West by local corps and the Mounted Police—does require serious consideration at the hands of the House. I have said that so long ago as 1879 the present Government recognised the necessity of arranging for the formation of local corps in the North-West, with reference to the defence of the settlements largely against the Indians. We have not got a very full account in the official reports of the proceedings that took place when Colonel Osborne Smith, then Deputy Adjutant General of the Militia, on the instructions of the Government, went forward to carry out their views and organise the corps. But I have secured from the contemporary literature of the day, from the local newspaper, statements which show the spirit in which the people at that time received those proposals of the Government and the ease with which it was possible, had proper steps been taken, to render them efficient. In the *Saskatchewan Herald* of the 6th October, 1879, there is a report of a meeting held in the school house at Battleford, to hear from Colonel Osborne Smith his explanation of the scheme for the proposed organisation of frontier companies.—

“A meeting was held in the school house on Monday evening to hear from Col. Smith an explanation of the scheme on which the proposed organisation of frontier corps was based. The meeting was opened by the appointment of Col. Richardson as chairman. He then introduced Col. Smith, and requested him to address the meeting.

“Col. Smith said that as commandant of the volunteer forces in Manitoba and the North-West he had been instructed by the Government to proceed as far as Battleford, to organise companies of volunteers on the plan which had been found so effective in the older Provinces for a good many years past; and where the population was too scattered to permit of full corps being organised, to establish the nucleus of companies which could afterwards be filled. The exceptional circumstances of the country might lead to a modification of some of the regulations which prevailed in the East. The general provisions of the Act may be summarised as follows: Volunteers will be required to take the oath of allegiance.”

“They will be required to drill not less than 6 nor more than 12 days in the year; but the time may be so divided as to be of the least inconvenience, three hours constituting a day's drill. For this they will receive 50 cents a day, with an additional allowance of 75 cents a day in the case of cavalry companies. The arms to be supplied are of the very best kind, and have all been carefully examined and packed, so as to ensure their being served out in good condition. There will also be an abundant supply of ammunition. Both arms and ammunition have been shipped to a central point and can be forwarded to any given place without loss of time. No uniform will be used during the first year.”

I call your attention to that statement, because its importance will be found when we consider and read the subsequent reports with respect to the North-West corps. There was a promise of uniform after the first year:

“If called out on active duty they will be paid at a rate to be decided by the Governor General in Council. He would, therefore, leave the matter, for the present, in the hands of Mr. Scott, who would enroll the men and forward the names to him. He would go to St. Laurent, Duck Lake and Prince Albert, where he expected to be able to raise the number of companies now required, namely, two companies of infantry and three of mounted men. He thanked the meeting for assembling to hear him and offered to give any other information that might be required.”

“The chairman said the present meeting reminded him of a similar one that was held at the country town in which he lived at the time of the Trent affair, 20 years ago, when he, amongst others, enrolled his name as a private. He continued with his battalion until 5 years ago, when he was allowed to retire, retaining his rank, having risen from the lowest to the highest position in the battalion to which he belonged; and he was quite willing to begin again by enrolling his name as a private in the company now about to be formed.

“The following resolution was then passed:

“Moved by Mr. Foryst, seconded by Mr. Laurie, That it is expedient to form an infantry company at this place, and this meeting pledges itself to aid in the perfecting of such an organisation.

“A vote of thanks was given to Col. Smith and the chairman, and the meeting broke up.”

In the same paper, on 17th November, 1879, I find the following:—

“The arms and ammunition for the Battleford volunteer company arrived on the 3rd, and were at once taken charge of by Captain Scott. We are pleased to learn that he has been successful in organising the company. The feeling of the members is in favor of its being a mounted corps, in which case a considerable accession could be had to its ranks, besides which it would be much more effective in the event of its service being required. James McFarlane, our pioneer settler and an ex-volunteer, has been made first lieutenant, and Hugh McKay, chief officer of the Hudson Bay Company at this post, second lieutenant.”

In the same paper, 22nd September, 1879, was the following:—

“The visit of Col. W. Osborne Smith, referred to in our telegraphic columns, will probably result in the formation of a company of cavalry or mounted rifles at Prince Albert. Captain Moore offered, some time ago, to organise such a force, in which the men would, at their own expense, uniform themselves in a dress suitable for the plains, if the Government would furnish the arms and pay a nominal sum—say \$2 a day—for a man and horse when on duty. Prince Albert has all the material for an excellent corps of this character. The young men are born horsemen, and accustomed to life upon the plains, while there are also several gentlemen of military training and experience fitted to take command, and a fair sprinkling of others who have served in volunteer forces in the Provinces.”

In the same paper, on 20th October, 1879, was the following:—

“Col. Smith at Prince Albert.—Enrolment of one infantry and two cavalry companies.—A company formed at Duck Lake.—On the evening of Monday the 6th, a meeting was held at the restaurant, Prince Albert, to meet Lieut.—Col. Smith, and to hear his explanations in reference to the duty with which he had been entrusted by the Government, the formation of volunteer militia corps in the Territories. Notwithstanding the short notice given, but one day, and the disadvantage of a very dark night, a large number assembled, many being present from the most remote parts of the settlement.

“The Lord Bishop of Saskatchewan being voted to the chair, spoke earnestly and forcibly on the necessity of assisting the Government in the measures they were taking to raise a force sufficient to back the civil powers in keeping peace, and paid a warm tribute to Col. Smith's military services, and to the good judgment shown by the Government in choosing him to perform the important work of organisation on which he is now engaged.

“Col. Smith, having been introduced by the Bishop, fully explained the object of his mission and the provisions of the militia law, announcing that he had decided to establish two mounted rifle corps in the settlement, under the respective commands of Captains Moore and Young, who would submit for approval the names of their subaltern officers and make the necessary appointments of non-commissioned officers.

“A number of questions put by intending volunteers were answered by Col. Smith, and a desire being shown for the establishment of an infantry corps, in addition to the two mounted companies, he consented to remain over another day, in order to enable its enrolment to be made, Mr. Thomas McKay being nominated as captain.

“After votes of thanks to the Bishop for presiding, and to Colonel Smith for his address, the meeting closed with cheers for the Queen, the Bishop, Col. Smith, and the officers chosen to command the companies.

“A large number of volunteers handed in their names for enrolment, and there is no doubt Prince Albert will have three crack corps.

“Mr. Owen E. Hughes is succeeding very well in the enrolment of the Duck Lake and St. Laurent company.

“The arms, accoutrements and ammunition arrived on the 8th at Carlton, from which point they will be distributed.

“Col. Smith left Duck Lake on the morning of the 8th to proceed direct to Wianipeg.”

And I find, Sir, in the same paper, on the 15th December, 1879, a report from Prince Albert, on the 8th December, 1879, stating:

“The volunteers mean business, and are drilling most of the time. Capt. Moore's and Capt. Thos. McKay's companies have put in their annual drill during the evenings. The following are the names of the officers of the several volunteer companies:

“Troop A, Mounted Rifles.—Capt., Chas. F. Young; 1st Lieut., Justin D. Wilson; 2nd Lieut., Thos. J. Agnew.

“Troop B, Mounted Rifles.—Capt., H. S. Moore; 1st Lieut., Edward Stanley; 2nd Lieut., Thos. N. Campbell.

“Infantry Company.—Capt., Thos. McKay; 1st Lieut., J. J. Campbell; 2nd Lieut., George Tait.”