

How have they been trained? How armed, clothed and shod?

The dismissal by the Imperial authorities of two hundred Canadian officers from the first contingent is rather conclusive evidence of the levity with which that contingent was organised. (\*)

Naturally, the total lack of experience of our Ministers, in war matters, the long standing and complete neglect of all preparations to make of our militia an efficient force of defense, have to be taken into account. Many errors, light or grave, ought not to be brought as a charge against the Minister of Militia and the officers in charge of the Val Cartier Camp. But that very lack of competency and preparation imposed upon them the duty of confining their effort to their ability and the means of action at their disposal. Nothing could excuse them from looking to essentials: a good choice of officers and men, the discipline of troops and their proper equipment.

On the conduct and discipline of troops, such a "loyal" paper as *l'Action Sociale* had to denounce the misconduct of a large number of soldiers. According to that journal, the peaceful inhabitants of Quebec had come to the point "of doubting whether they should not take means to protect themselves as well as their wives and daughters" against the enterprises of the defenders of the Empire. "At Lévis, the

(\*) The significance of that fact is the more serious that the British Army is in sore need of capable officers. As early as the 25th of September, one of the military experts of the "Times", gave this note of warning, which justifies entirely what I wrote in "Le Devoir", to the great scandal of our mouth and pen warriors:

"An army cannot be improvised at a moment's notice; and instances in which improvisation has been attempted in the past have been lamentable failures. Experienced officers are dubious concerning the armies which England is now raising at home because they do not think they will be ready to fight in the field for eighteen months, and then only if they have been trained by professional officers, the numbers of whom are limited and are being constantly decreased by losses in action.

"The question of officers is a serious one. An examination of our casualty list shows we have lost already over 1100 officers, in killed, wounded or missing. This is two out of every five among those at the front.

"More officers" is the constant call from the front and several hundred have been sent; but obviously this cannot be kept up forever and each officer sent is one less instructor for the new troops. We must not allow ourselves to become megalomaniacs and place in the field regiments which are unfit to defend the honor of our armies".