



This was the weak point of the measure of universal service which we had, and when war clouds banked heavily on the horizon and the Empire armed itself, the advent of the higher training of fewer men was inevitable, and the old epoch of the annual muster day drew to an end. What followed was the present system, under which we have served our Queen for the past forty years. The change came about gradually. At first a few *corps d'elite*, the Volunteers, made their appearance, and by 1856 these independent troops of horse, batteries of artillery and companies of rifles mustered some 5,000 men. Then when the Trent affair loomed threateningly over our heads the independent troops and companies were grouped in regiments and battalions, and thus the regular troops who formed the backbone of the defence

of the country had local auxiliaries ready to aid them in every direction. The instinctive reliance upon the trained, or even upon the half-trained man, caused the country to turn its thoughts mainly to the Volunteer Militia corps as its contribution towards self-defence, and to forget the duties and the place of the sedentary Militia, whose importance was steadily diminishing. Finally came the day when the last regulars marched on board the



THREE periods stand out in the story of the Canadian Militia. Our epic period was in the grim days of 1812, when our forefathers laid the foundation of Canada's right to an independent existence upon the North American continent. Nehemiah's builders found not unworthy successors in the hard pioneers

who fought and farmed alternately, one day serving in the Flank Companies, the next day dismissed by their Governor to bring in the harvest. With the Treaty of Ghent came the forty years during which the world dreamed of universal peace. That was the second period of the Militia, a period of a system which failed. Over the whole of the British American provinces obtained what may roughly be described as a theoretical perfection in universal service, vitiated by practical weakness in the mastery of the military art. Elaborate and careful arrangements made it certain that every able-bodied man in the country should be held liable to serve and should be periodically kept in mind of his obligation. Military experts of a theoretical turn of mind, surveying this system from afar, have approved highly of the hard and fast legislative enactments binding all men to serve the King. At closer view it was only too evident that a whole population could not be trained to the profession of arms, elaborate and exacting to the last degree, in one muster day a year.



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last troop-ship, and the Canadian Militia were Canada's sole defenders by land. By a coincidence, that occurrence marked the beginning of fifteen years of profound peace, during which the training day became a myth, and the uniformed battalions who were recruited by volunteering pure and simple were looked upon as the military arm upon which Canada's first and last dependence lay. The North-West Rebellion invigorated the Militia force, but with the new-found popularity of what we may call the volunteering Militia the old idea of universal service receded farther and farther into the background. And now we are at the crest of the third period, with our Militia proud of a century of loyal service to Crown and Country, zealous to make such progress as twelve days' drill allows, but forgetful of the fact that the whole Militia is the people in arms, and that we of the Active Militia are but a fraction, but the first line, of the mass of the national army. There, in brief, is our history up to the present day.

It is good to recall the honorable part which our Militia played in what we may well style the War of Canadian Independence. American aggression resolved itself into an attack upon the right of our long, thin line, and so it came about that upon Upper Canada the brunt of the fighting fell. British command of the sea ensured the safety of the Maritime Provinces, which, sheltered on