

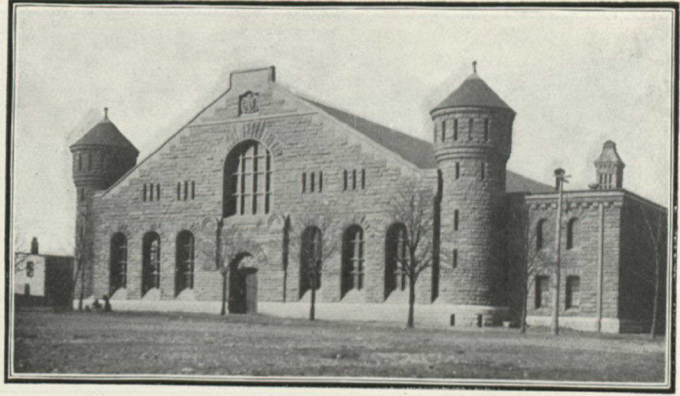
edge of military movement. All that was expected from these good folk was to answer their names as subjects of the Queen.

Of course there was a Colonel, or a Major, or a Captain, ready to address the phalanx after the sergeant had settled the Roll and reported things all right. That speech required a certain operation of the brain to make it suit the dignity of the circumstance. In full peace with our neighbours, with no internal trouble and having amongst us a few thousand regular troops, what could a son of Mars say to stimulate the courage and patriotism of his would-be heroes? Well, he did not forget the forefathers, who had done marvels in their days; he would dwell upon the good reputation of the people of the locality and vouch for their zeal in the defence of the country, if ever the wars of old were to be repeated. This was quite enough, considering the military is not talkative generally.

As I refer here solely to a French community, I must add that the senior officer in command closed the performance by raising his hat and shouting *Vive la Reine!* The whole line waved hats and yelled *Vive la Reine!* The officer, with head uncovered, then asked: *Trois hourrahs pour la Reine.* The crowd, including myself, joined in the cheer, and the "thin line" of future defenders of the soil is broken—the parade is over.

All those who acted as officers on that day dined together and the "Independent Band" of the place paid them the compliment of a serenade. There was no end to gossiping through the town about the parade. All the boys played soldiers.

In 1854 I saw the regiments leaving Canada for the Crimean War. Soon after I heard grown-up people asking what should happen in the case of a riot,



DRILL HALL AT HALIFAX

a disturbance of any kind, in the absence of the British Forces. The reply came: Organize the Militia. So our Legislature set at work to frame a law with that in view, but it turned that the matter was a difficult one to manage. Some eight or ten bills were proposed and rejected from 1855 to 1867. Nevertheless each year saw a corps or two, more or less equipped, more or less drilled, trying and doing the best they could in order to deserve the name of "Active Militia" bestowed upon them by the public voice. The newspapers published articles, correspondences and commentaries with the continuity of gatling guns.

Some wise men predicted that after the fall of Sebastopol, the Imperial Troops were to come back and render the Militia useless. Nobody knew that the India Mutiny was close at hand, and that caused also a sensation when we understood that the prolonged absence of the Regulars left us with the Militia as a unique resource for public safety. Therefore we went on scribbling new bills for the Legislature and articles for the newspapers. By that time I was a sergeant in the Militia, and already a pen-dragger as at present.

We had had no time to think of the return of the troops from India, when the United States Civil War broke out in 1861. Decidedly it was time that the Militia should be made effective, but how was it to be done? No one knew. And we boys drilled every second evening after the style of the Wellington veterans, who