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The Militia Council

By *THE EDITOR*



HE establishment of the Militia Council and the consequent reorganisation of the Headquarters Staff are important events in the development of the Canadian Militia, and all who take an interest in military matters are watching the effect of the changes with much interest.

The Army Council was hardly organised in England before it became known in military circles in Canada, that it was the intention of Sir Frederick Borden, Minister of Militia and Defence, to seek such amendments to the Militia Act as would admit of the appointment of a Militia Council, to administer the Department of Militia and Defence on the same lines, as far as possible, as the Army Council administers the War Office.

Sir Frederick is known to have expressed himself, on more than one occasion, as almost despairing of ever administering the Department in a manner satisfactory to himself under the old conditions. His holding such views, after being at the head of the Department for over eight years, would seem to be strong evidence that there were insurmountable obstacles in the way. Two obstacles, and perhaps the two chief ones, were the want of continuity in the work, and the absence of co-operation among the heads of the several branches of the Department.

Between the departure of Major-General Ivor Herbert and the appointment of the Militia Council, a period of less than ten years, the Militia had been command-

ed by Major-Generals Gascoigne, Hutton, O'Grady-Haly, and Lord Dundonald, and for periods aggregating perhaps a year, Lord Aylmer, Adjutant-General, was in command. Every change of General practically meant a new policy. No new General has been known to have taken up with any degree of enthusiasm important work commenced by his predecessor. Each in his turn preferred to branch out in some new direction. Sometimes the Minister, who, perhaps, had had difficulty in persuading his colleagues to approve of a certain line of action, could not "right about turn" without some stronger argument than that there had been a change in Generals, and then trouble between the Minister and the General would commence. Such frequent changes also retarded the development and efficiency of the force, not to speak of the cost to the state.

The want of co-operation might seem to be a matter which could have been remedied, but with the best intentions on the part of the officers of the Department, co-operation was lacking. The fault was due to the system.

The new Militia Council will, it is hoped, ensure continuity in the work and co-operation among the various branches, and if it accomplishes nothing more, its organisation will have been more than justified. It is organised under the Militia Act of 1904, Sec. 7, which reads:

"The Governor-in-Council may appoint a Militia Council to advise the Minister on all matters relating to the Militia which