

In line with his wish to follow as far as possible the English militia system, Simcoe introduced by his first Militia Act into Upper Canada the office of Lieutenant of Counties, an office held in England by a gentleman or nobleman of loyalty and distinction, as military deputy for the King, for the government of the militia in their respective counties.

On the division of the counties or ridings, Simcoe appointed a Lieutenant in each whose duty was the delimitation of the militia districts, with a general oversight and power of recommendation of officers to the command of the militia force. Simcoe's views on this subject are found in a letter he wrote to Col. Alex. McKee on his appointment to the office of Lieutenant of Essex County, as follows:—

"It may not be improper to observe that this high office under the constitution of Britain is generally conferred upon the persons who seem most respectable to His Majesty's Government, for their property, loyalty, abilities and discretion in their several counties, and from a combination of such possessions and qualities, acquire that weight, respect, and public confidence which render them the natural support of constitutional authority. If on the one hand this office has been at all times bestowed by the Sovereign with the circumspection and caution due to the important trusts which it involves, on the other it has been a principal object of honorable ambition, which the British Constitution approves, in the first men of the State, making a due provision of power for that local aristocracy which the experience of ages has proved necessary to the balance and permanency of her inestimable form of government."

The office of Lieutenants of Counties does not seem to have suited the conditions of the new country, and it did not last long. The granting of commissions in the militia was preferred to be vested directly in the Crown, without the intermediation of the Lieutenants of Counties. In this only did Simcoe's plan fail of success.

The governing principle of this first militia law, and the principle has been retained ever since, was practically universal liability to service. With certain very natural limitations, the whole male population between the ages of 16 and 50, composed the militia. Every lad on attaining the age of sixteen was obliged to enroll himself with the militia officer in charge of the district under penalty for neglect of a fine of four dollars. This first militia of Upper Canada was something more than a sedentary militia; though not much more, perhaps. The force was divided into regiments and companies, and every company had to be paraded and inspected by its captain at least twice a year, a serious enough obligation in those days, with the difficult means of communication taken into consideration. Though there was no provision for pay for these parades, the officer who absented himself was liable to a fine of eight dollars, and the private to one of two dollars for each offence. The first enrollment under this Act produced a force of 4,213. The result appears to have fallen short of expectations, and in the following year (1794) the Militia Act of Upper Canada was amended so as to make men up to sixty years of age eligible for the militia, and the scope of the force was at the same time extended, the militiamen becoming liable for service on the war vessels on the lakes.

This was a stirring time for Europe, and also for Canada. The French Revolution, with its excesses and upheavals, affected the whole world. Continental Europe stood aghast; England girded up her loins for the inevitable conflict. In 1793, Genest, the Ambassador of the French Directory in the United States, began to fit out privateers against British commerce. The anti-federalists (or democrats) encouraged him, and when France declared war upon Britain they urged that the United States should enter into alliance with the new French republic in return for the assistance France had given during the Revolutionary War. George Wash-