

ponies were like the proverbial singed cat; they rebuked those who judged by appearances. They knew nothing of storehouse and barn; they were accustomed to accept Nature's free lunch, and so at halts on the march they would have their heads down and their mouths busy, while their more aristocratic neighbors were waiting (too often vainly) to be fed. Red River carts came in too, some of them dragged by oxen. These carts are made of wood only; when they break, a piece of green hide makes the mend, and when dry it binds more firmly than iron. These vehicles do not delight in travel; on their large wooden axles the wheels turn with shrieking remonstrance, and it never occurs to the owner to quiet the indescribable squawking with any lubricator.

In Edmonton at the North there were alarms, and rumours of war,—so report said. The Indians began to threaten; and in the Hudson Bay Company's fort many bullet marks told how they had done so in old days when all the inhabitants could be protected by its walls. But now there was a town; and if the Half-Breeds were to follow Riel's advice and the Indians were to be their partners, there might be the horrors of massacre. It was of little use appealing to the Police at Fort Saskatchewan, for they were few, and it able to defend their post in case of attack they would do well. These things were reported at Calgary; then the regular mail service failed, and men had to guess what was going on.

There came a day, April twenty-fourth it was, when the gun-horses were hitched to, and the loaded wagons defiled after it from the Fort yard. The first column had gone its way northward four days before, and as there was a third force to leave in a week, this force with the gun was known as the "centre column." This estimate of its size was written down in the pocket diary of a bystander, as the column marched past him: Left wing of the Sixty-fifth, 148 men; 24 Mounted Policemen; 100 vehicles with 60 teamsters, and one nine-pounder gun.

One might ask how there was need of a wagon for each couple of soldiers. The truth was this column was in a sense a provision train. Calgary was the base of supplies, and the objective point was two hundred miles distant,—with a likelihood of having to march twice as far beyond. The column was at one time five hundred miles from the base, in a country where there was nothing in the way of forage,—except grass. So there was wisdom in providing for such emergency. It was thought also that there might be some destitution among the people near Edmonton, to which these Government supplies would have to minister.

Along through the prairie-street of Calgary moved the column, and beside the men went a crowd of friends and on-lookers. The mounted men in advance deployed at the ford of the Bow River. The footmen were crossed in the wagons. The Gun rumbled mightily as the horses leaped forward, eager for the freedom of the prairie after their delay in crowded stalls. A cheer went up as the last horseman crossed—the rear guard. Beyond the river Major Perry, of the Police, once of the Royal Engineers, was commander of the column, and director of the destinies of the Gun. And the story is yet to be told how he risked his life one day, and all for the sake of the Big Gun.

WILLIAM P. MCKENZIE.

THE GIGANTIC ARMY OF FRANCE.

The official report on the war budget for 1893 has just been placed in the hands of the French deputies. The figures are bewildering. Since 1871 the military expenses, without counting the navy, amount to eighteen milliards of francs. Subtracting from this sum the pensions and strategic railway expenses, there remain for strictly military expenditures fifteen milliards three hundred and sixty-eight millions of francs. Of this sum two milliards eight hundred and ninety-one millions have been expended in the reconstruction of war material and eleven milliards seven hundred and seventy-four millions for the support and preparation of armies. Here are some of the figures in detail:

	Francs.
Armament	1,565,149,660
Fortifications	781,560,536
Subsistence	81,388,730
Clothing	242,594,022

Sanitary service	22,991,583
Remounting	27,847,594
Railroads	35,671,605

The largest item in the bill was the cost of changes in the French infantry rifle. The Chassepot was discarded in 1874 for the Gras rifle, and the whole army, with the reserves, were furnished with this weapon when, in 1886, the Lebel rifle appeared. In five years this new rifle was supplied to all the infantry and cavalry. Its extraordinary accuracy and power have already been described.

In fortifications the work has been pressed on with feverish activity. Vast intrenched camps have been established at Lille, Maubenge, Besancon, Belfort, Verdun, and other points. The forts around these places completely shelter them from bombardment. Moreover, the railroads and all important routes are supplied with forts. The discovery of new explosives has necessitated some troublesome alterations in the fortifications. To protect the casements and magazines, the safety of which was not sufficiently guaranteed by the earthworks, it was necessary to make beds of beton of immense thickness. Armored cupolas have also been established in some of the fortresses. Sheltering places and powder magazines have also been made in rocks. The forts have also undergone alterations in regard to the position of the guns. They were at first found to be too much exposed, and annexing batteries on a level with the ground, intended for oblique firing, have been set up to support them. At the same time special works have been constructed for the infantry destined to defend the guns. The sanitary condition of the barracks has been the object of great care, to guard against epidemics.

In 1869 the regular army of France footed up 24,005 officers, 385,372 men, and 80,702 horses. At present it counts 28,382 officers, 484,015 men and 140,879 horses. In 1869 the army was divided into 372 battalions of infantry, 238 squadrons of cavalry, and 232 batteries of artillery. The present army has 727 battalions of infantry, 448 squadrons of cavalry, and 580 batteries of artillery. It should be remembered that the figures for 1869 given above represent the entire military force of France at that time; while the figures of 1892 represent only the active army on a peace footing. The effective forces of this army become doubled in a few days at the time of mobilization by calling out the trained reserves, and between them and the regulars there is no perceptible difference in their value as soldiers. Moreover, these reserves are also doubled by another reserve force. And yet this is not all. In fact it is only the first line of the fighting men of the French army. The second line is composed of the men of the territorial army. This army, added to the first line, gives a fighting force represented by the following figures: Infantry, 1,650 battalions; cavalry, 600 squadrons; artillery, 750 batteries.

Including the forces at the depots, this represents a total of more than 2,000,000 of men. And to this colossal fighting force must still be added the 850,000 men enrolled in the reserve of the territorial army, all trained troops.

The strategic railroads and the lines of telegraph form a gigantic network, which is kept in constant running order.

These figures are well known in Germany, and it is no wonder that Emperor William is calling for more soldiers.

MILITARY MATTERS IN NEW SOUTH WALES.

The report of the Military Commission was submitted to the Government at Sydney the other day. In it the Commission recommends the creation of a Minister of Defence, and also the reorganization of the naval and military forces in such a way as to secure greater efficiency and at the same time effect a saving of about £50,000 a year, reducing the expenditure from £280,068 to £232,102. Amongst other recommendations of the Commission are those relative to renting of a modern ship of war from the Imperial Government, the selection of officers from the Imperial Service, and that such accoutrements, including great-coats, &c., as can be produced in the Colonies be obtained locally. The investigation by the Commission not only took into account the naval and military forces, but also the cadet system, relative to which certain changes are proposed. Sir George Dibbs has called for a report from the principal military officers in the Colony, with the view of ascertaining how far the recommendations made by the Military Commission can be carried out.