

Annual Report on the State of the Militia for 1874.

(Continued from Page 244.)

APPENDIX NO. 1,

MILITARY DISTRICT, NO. 11.

REPORT OF THE ARTILLERY OF THE PROVINCE OF QUEBEC.

CITADEL, QUEBEC,
31st December, 1-74.

SIR,—I have the honor, in submitting my annual report, respectfully to inform you that I have little to add to the remarks and recommendations made in my reports for the last two years, except that the casemates of the Citadel of Quebec are, as you are no doubt aware, being placed in a state of thorough repair as well as those at Point Levis.

I beg to submit a copy of my last year's report on armament (A) which was not published; only adding to it the recommendation that the 9 pounder muzzle loading rifle gun of 6 cwt. might, advantageously, be substituted for the 9 pounder gun of 8 cwt. for Field Artillery.

I wish especially to draw your attention to the difficulties that beset a very excellent battery of respectable, intelligent and physically fine men, under command of Major Slous (1st class certificate "B" Battery Gunnery School), at Gaspé. The commanding officer and 12 non commissioned officers obtained permission to join the Quebec Gunnery School last winter. After making arrangements for that object, the commanding officer and three non commissioned officers only were permitted to join. The others having given up their winter employment, complained to me, through their commanding officer, that they had suffered seriously in consequence.

The battery is, further, much discouraged in consequence of not being supplied with guns with which, to my knowledge, they were informed they would be supplied two years ago. The expense I represented would be very little, if any, as there are plenty of 24 pounder smooth bore guns and carriages to spare at Quebec, which with a few rounds of ammunition for practice, the Superintendent of the Marine and Fishery Department offered to send down, without cost, if authorized.

A large proportion of the uniforms served out to this corps are too small for the men, who are very much above the average in physique.

I need not remark upon the advantage of having an armament, of even smooth bore guns at Gaspé Harbor, that would cost nothing and not deteriorate, the drills and exercises being the same as for the 64 32 pounder converted Palliser rifled guns, for which these smooth bore guns could be subsequently exchanged if thought advisable, the iron carriages being suitable for either nature and not deteriorating from exposure to weather &c, as before stated.

The same remarks as to armament apply to the excellently trained artillery detachment at Grosse Isle Quarantine Station, under the command of Captain F. Montzumbert. (1st class certificate "B" Battery Gunnery School.) They have only two 12 pounder smooth bore guns and one unserviceable 18 pounder, while the battery under Major Drummond, at St. Johns, Province of Quebec—a point of importance, commanding the Richelieu River, at the junction of three

railroads—has only one gun. None of the above guns are sighted. All these corps offered to throw up batteries and mount guns if supplied from those in store at Quebec and Montreal.

Herewith enclosed:

(A) Tabular return of inspection on the form supplied (No. 105) which is not, you will observe, suitable for Artillery or Engineer corps.

(B) Report submitted by officers commanding Sheffield Field Battery.

(C) Report of officer commanding No. 1, Engineer Company, Montreal.

T. B. STRANGE Lt. Col.
Inspector of Artillery,
Province of Quebec.

(A)

Armament.

In view of the repeal of the Canadian Defence Act by the Imperial Government, at the request of the Dominion, it is, I presume, futile to consider the nature of the old armament for Quebec proposed as a gift from the Imperial Government, or to speculate on the possibility of the Act being repealed. It only remains to consider the lowest cost of an efficient armament, *viz* last year's (1872) Militia Report, page xxix.

"The heaviest guns mounted on the Citadel at Quebec are four 7 inch breech loading rifle guns on the salients, there are five more with carriages and platforms, and 200 rounds per gun in charge of the storekeeper at Quebec; and one dismantled where the platform was left incomplete by the Royal Engineers, by whom the racers were laid in the salient of barrack bastion, which commands Dorchester Bridge head and a wide sweep of country. The trifling expense of filling in concrete alone remains to be authorized.

Two of these guns having been sent to Kingston, I would recommend that the remaining three should be mounted, one on the salient of each front at Point Levis, where no guns as heavy could be brought against them over land.

The important fortress of Quebec could be re-armed at a comparatively trifling cost, by selling the greater proportion of obsolete smooth bore guns for old iron, and substituting the Palliser converted 64 34 pounder muzzle loading rifle guns. The old cast iron carriages, platforms, side arms, stores, shot, shell and ammunition could still be used with these guns, which retain their 32 pounder calibre and exterior form. Such an armament, simple, serviceable, incapable of injury by rough handling or climate, requiring no complicated drill, would fulfil all requirements, and if well posted, prevent or render it entirely hazardous for any enemy to attempt establishing batteries on the land and St. Charles River front.

The building of a graving dock at Quebec which would, I presume, be available for the Royal Navy, point more closely than I can do to the necessity of protecting such an establishment from the fortress that commands it. The rise and fall of tide in St. Charles River would be an advantage, giving a wet and dry dock at will, while the exchange of the 24 pounder smooth bore on the lower lines for 64-32 Palliser, as proposed, would give complete defensive command.

The latter river could not be entered by iron clads except at a few hours at high tides, when they would run the risk of being left in the mud.

To cope with heavy iron clads on the St. Lawrence, such as are not, however, at pre-

sent to be found in any Cis-Atlantic Navy, a few 12 ton muzzle loading rifle guns would be required, one on the King's Cavalier would give an all round fire with a perfect command over the deck of any vessel. Indeed a 64 32 pounder shell striking the deck would, from the Citadel, be quite capable of knocking the bottom out of any ironclad, as they are of course, unarmed below water, to say nothing of the effects of a bursting shell between decks.

A few rifled guns on the lower lines would be, however, necessary to keep vessels from getting inside the distance at which the Citadel guns could not be depressed. A few torpedoes commanded by guns would, it is hoped, prevent any ordinary floating enemy from bombarding the town.

The Volunteer and Militia Coast Artillery of Great Britain are almost entirely armed with 64 32 Pounder Pallisers, and the Government of India has also decided on a Palliser's armament.

The Colony of Victoria, New South Wales, has purchased 20 of the 64-32 Pounder converted Palliser, as proposed for Quebec; but they probably were compelled to pay for carriages and travelling platforms, &c., an expense which we can avoid by adopting the armament proposed.

Any other description of rifled guns would necessitate the purchase of new carriages and platforms, at a cost ten times greater than that of the proposed armament.

Take for example the 7 inch muzzle loading rifles as the least expensive Garrison Gun—

Gun.....	£503 5 1
Sights.....	7 5 9
Carriages.....	140 8 0
Traversing Platform.....	230 5 0

Total..... £881 3 10
or \$4,288 33, exclusive of racers and the cost of laying them.

30 Guns at £881 3 10 each, £26,435 15 0
—\$128,656 97. Compare this to £4,098 12 5
—\$19,945.97, the cost of the proposed armament of, say 30 64 32 Pounder M.L.R. Guns, at £136 12 5 each, including sights, and from which may be deducted the probable amount to be realized by the sale of old guns.

It will be necessary to examine the old guns to find the exact number unserviceable, but it may be roughly estimated as follows, viz:

At Quebec alone 173 tons 16 cwt., at £4 2 6 per ton—£716 18 6.

The above prices are taken from No. 2 balance sheet of the Woolwich price lists, which is 15 per cent. above cost price, but the old guns will probably realize more than the price laid down in consequence of the rise in iron.

The same remarks apply to Kingston, St. Helen's Island, and other places in the Dominion where there are a considerable number of old guns, the sale of which would go towards paying for an efficient armament.

The existing supply of carriages, on which time and climate produce no effect, would serve to mount the new rifle guns.

At Quebec alone the number is as follows:—

Carriages 64, platforms 33, all suitable for 64 32 Pounder muzzle loading guns.

I beg to refer you to my letter dated 5th April 1873, informing you that the pillar percussion fuzes supplied for the 7th B.L.R. Guns are obsolete, and the number of tin cups below regulation; also the percussion

* Since this report was submitted, I am informed that the Volunteer Garrison Artillery at Halifax, N.S., have also been supplied with them by the liberality of the Imperial Government.