

MEMORANDUM ON THE MILITIA SYSTEM OF CANADA.

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There is another argument in favor of the plan proposed, which would appear likely to occur to those who believe in a future for the Dominion. Can a country aspire to greatness which neglects its own means of self-defence; and would the people of Canada be satisfied to provide men sufficiently trained, and to rely for officers from the regular Imperial Army? Does not the proper organization of a defensive force including training for its officers, devolve on a country as much as the formation of the means for administering justice, or of a Department to preside over its maritime interests? In all that concerns self-government, the Dominion has made rapid strides; its civil service is well organized, its public departments carefully managed. Would it not therefore follow that steps should be taken to provide for the efficiency of the military establishment by supplying the want which the withdrawal of the regular troops has created? This want is only beginning to be felt; as yet, officers who have received instructions in the volunteer schools formed in connection with the regular regiments, which were first established in Canada, and afterwards introduced into England, hold commands in the militia; and non-commissioned officers, formerly soldiers of the Imperial army, are still available to instruct the recruits in the rudiments of drill. These conditions will, however, soon change; and even supposing the schools formerly established continue to maintain their efficiency when deprived of the assistance the regular regiments afforded, there is no body of men with professional training to insure the advance of military science, and to profit by the experience which the Continental nations of Europe have earned at the cost of blood and treasure. Without a professionally trained force, the standard of efficiency will gradually become lower, and the form of military service will be maintained, whilst the spirit will be dead. There will be plenty of officers in gay uniforms too closely resembling those of the Imperial army, and at grades there will be some showy manoeuvres; but the true instruction of the modern soldier, to the necessity of which, all who think seriously of war are awakening, will be neglected, and even ignored. A revolution is even now passing over the organization and training of European armies, and if Canada wishes to profit by the changes which will follow, she must have men whose business it is to study the art of war as professionals, and not as amateurs.

Having thus stated briefly the want which it is believed exists, and the reason, which have led to this belief, it remains to be seen whether, at but little expense, this want can be supplied. It is presumed, as has been already stated, that some small permanently embodied force is necessary; and that without it there is a danger lest the whole defensive organization of the Dominion should in a few years deteriorate. By merely improving on what already exists, the nucleus of an army could be obtained, and the expense involved would be more than compensated for by the benefits that would accrue. It must however, always be remembered that the true defensive strength of the country will remain with its militia; the active force, as is the case at present, being in readiness to be called out at a short notice, the reserve forming the second line and serving as a feeder to the active force.

With regard to the organization of the active militia, it will be seen on reference to the report of the commission above alluded to, to whose labours the organization of the present system is in great measure due, that a head-quarters, divisional and regimental staff are recommended. But only the two first of these recommendations have been as yet carried out. The third has been omitted, and there is no permanent regimental staff of any description. It is proposed to remedy this defect and at the same time to avoid the evil of keeping on pay for long periods of each year men for whom no work, except during the season of training, can be found, by a plan of which the outline only can be furnished, to be filled up by those who have practical experience of the needs of the Canadian militia.

It is suggested to establish in the Dominion three training schools, using those already in existence in Quebec and Kingston and adding another for the maritime provinces, probably at Halifax, where the presence of the regular troops might be of advantage. These training schools should consist of a small force of the three arms, viz., cavalry, artillery and infantry, which should correspond with the active militia of the four provinces. The troop, or even half troop, of cavalry would contain the permanent regimental staff of the cavalry of the district; the battery of artillery, in the same way, of the field and garrison artillery; and the companies of infantry of the militia infantry. Supposing about 31,000 men (i.e. rank and file) to be the numbers of the active militia, divided in equal proportions between three districts; that is, three regiments of cavalry equal to 1,800; twelve batteries of artillery 3,000; and thirty-six regiments of infantry 28,800, with possibly a small force of engineers numbering 200, and of a military train 200. (a) These troops, as in the case at the present time, to be called out for yearly training and inspection. The duration of the drill to be fixed by statute, due regard being had to real efficiency. To correspond with this force, at each of the three training schools would be one half troop of cavalry numbering about 40 non-commissioned officers and men and 30 horses; one battery of artillery numbering about 250 men, of which two guns only would be fully horsed, requiring seventy-eight horses; (b) three companies of infantry, each section of each company corresponding with a regiment of infantry, in all 240 men, and a few non-commissioned officers to be instructed in the duties of engineers and train; the whole force at each of the three schools would not be more than 530 non-commissioned officers and men. With regard to officers it would probably be necessary at the present time to obtain commandants of these schools from the regular army, as is now done at the artillery schools of Quebec and Kingston. These should be selected either from officers who have been educated at the staff college, due regard of course being had to other qualifications; or from those who, known to be good regimental officers, have passed

(a) NOTE.—These numbers are approximately, regard being had to, the establishment of the cavalry, artillery and infantry in the Imperial service.

(b) NOTE.—The number of horses for the two guns might possibly be reduced, or some of the horses used for other purposes when not required for service or instruction. The proportion of artillery permanently embodied is high in comparison with the infantry, partly because the battery is the lowest tactical unit of that arm, partly on account of the additional training required by artillerymen, and the consequent necessity of a larger number of instructed men, and partly from the fact that infantry drill forming a part of the instruction of garrison batteries, a portion of the men would be available as a means of teaching the infantry officers battalion drill.

through one or more of the various schools at Shoeburyness, Chatham or Hythe. If Canadians can be found who, having entered the Imperial army, were in all respects well qualified, preference might be given to them; but high proficiency should be required, qualities for command being combined with power of imparting instruction. The appointment should be for five years, with possibly power of renewal for an additional term, and conditional on the officer's visiting Europe and keeping himself acquainted with the changes and improvements in the art of war. It would be a question whether the command of the school could not be united with the Deputy Adjutant Generalship of the district, (a) the brigade majors acting as second in command. A second in command (if the brigade majors were not utilized), an adjutant a doctor and a quartermaster would form the staff of the school, whilst a due proportion of officers, say two for the battery of artillery, one for the cavalry, and three for the three companies of infantry, selected from militia officers who, having evinced good capacity, are willing to embrace the military profession as a career, would receive commissions to act as instructors in the training schools and as staff during the drill season of the active militia. To these schools all gentlemen recommended for commissions in the active militia would be required to come for a period of six months on first appointment, when their commissions would depend on the ability they displayed during the course of instruction. In the event of regimental promotion, (b) and no other promotion, except in the permanent staff of the militia, should in peace time be possible, officers should be required to attend for three months at one of the schools, passing through a severe training, both bodily and mental; and being required to obtain a qualifying certificate before their promotion could be confirmed. A judicious transference from the active to the reserve lists, of officers who either from age or other causes appeared unlikely to be fit for service, would keep the senior ranks of the active militia sufficiently young, and would facilitate promotion. Any promising young officer who might evince a desire to remain longer at the schools of instruction either with the object of qualifying in the event of a vacancy occurring in the permanent force, or with the view of obtaining a deeper insight into their professional duties, should be encouraged to do so; and it might be a question whether some opening could not

(a) NOTE.—The appointment of the Deputy Adjutant General of the district to the command of the school would save expense, but would render difficult the selection of an officer to fill the important post. It would have the advantage of consolidating into one place the military duties of the district, and of keeping the officer in command in constant intercourse with military life; whilst during the time of the yearly drill he would be free for purposes of inspection, as the schools would in great measure be broken up by the employment of the officers, non-commissioned officers and men with the reserve for months. It might be a question whether the brigade majors could be spared from their several localities, and whether it would not be desirable, in the event of the Deputy Adjutant General being an infantry officer, of the second in command being an artilleryman, combining, as is at present the case, the inspectorship of artillery and warlike stores of the district with the work of instruction. If the Deputy Adjutant General were an artillery officer, the second in command should be taken from the infantry.

(b) NOTE.—The present system of promotion, viz., that of giving a step in rank after five years' service in the Active Militia (containing probably not more than eighty days' actual duty) without regard to the command attaching to rank, will go far to reduce to a minimum the value of military titles, to injure discipline, and to render impossible the proper working together in time of war of the Imperial and colonial forces. It is a most serious mistake, and one that requires immediate remedy.