

Mr. Benjamin Suite of Ottawa has been undoubtedly the leading authority on the French Militia, and I therefore draw the following interesting historical facts relating to it from his extensive and valuable work on that subject : *

The Canadian Militia dates back to 1649, when the population of the colony did not exceed 1,000 souls. Some 50 men were then under arms to drive off Iroquois marauders. From that time the Militia has always had its marked place among us, because, under the French regime, it held the place of the Royal Troops, and since 1760 it was frequently relied on as the chief force of the country.

The story for a couple of centuries mixes together militia and regular. The Carignan Regiment arrived in 1665 and left in 1669, but the militia was already in existence. It was the militia which played the principal role in the first campaign of 1666 against the Iroquois. In 1674-1676 Count de Frontenac reorganized the militia, and up to 1760 it remained under his formation. The British authorities kept it for a century after that on the same plan. From 1684 to 1740 occasional companies of regulars from France were merely auxiliaries to the militia in the defence of Canada. But Dieskau, then Montcalm, in bringing French regiments (1753-1755) to carry on the war with England, changed the aspect of things and the Militia took second place for the first time since 1665, but one knows that it covered itself with glory during this war of 7 years which terminated 18th Sep., 1760, by the capitulation of Montreal. When the English took possession of Canada the three classes which deserved attention and consideration were (1) The Catholic clergy, (2) The Habitants born on the soil, (3) The militia 'composed of "2"', active and animated by an excellent spirit. The militia received no pay and no equipment, each man furnishing his own fire-piece. Parishes were responsible for units of 5, 10, 20 men to a half or a full company. The Captain was a man of influence and ability, selected for these reasons. He served as bailiff, &c., and received all the communications from the Government. In a general way he co-operated with the Seigneur and the Curé, and he had a special pew (banc d'honneur) in the church. In those days training was confined to practice in shooting, as matters relating to camping, transport, &c., were 'in the blood' and part of the French-man's daily life.

The institution "Captains of Militia" of the parishes was not disdained by the Coroners—far from that. They recognized in it an importance which the lapse of years rendered greater. Mr

* See also Mr. Suite's paper in Transactions of the Institute for 1896-97, p. 27-32.