

TO THE SURVIVING VETERANS OF 1837-8-9.

The above is the title of a pamphlet from the pen of Major R. R. McLennan, the herculean M.P. for Glengarry. The title—really a dedication—does not do justice to the work, which is practically a summary of the efforts made by the author and others to obtain some sort of practical recognition from the Government for the services of the loyal volunteers who acted in suppressing the rebellion of 1837-8. The just claim of these veterans is apparent to every unprejudiced man, and it is annoying to learn from the work under notice the degree of fear with which most of the parliamentarians, both in Toronto and Ottawa, regarded the discussion of the measure, and the determined opposition it met with from some of these gentry. It shows how strong a hold the curse of party politics has on all who come under its influence, and the absolute cowardice of so many members on a question such as this. Major Macdonald gives in detail the motions that have been made from time to time in the Ontario and Dominion Houses, and the names of the members who voted for and against compensation, concluding the *brochure* with the republication of some of Sir Francis Bond Head's proclamations and speeches of 1837-8; the official acknowledgments of the services of the volunteers; and extracts from "Christie's History of Lower Canada," referring to various phases of the rebellion. The following is Major McLennan's summary of the efforts that have been made so far:—

"You will see the justification of the statements made by Sir John A. Macdonald and the Honourable Edward Blake, from the documents and the extracts which I have placed before you. You will also see that the Governments of the Provinces of Upper and Lower Canada passed legislation many years ago for the compensating of men interested in that rebellion. The Conservative Government, led by Mr. Draper, recommended and passed a measure granting £40,000 for compensating the loyalists in the Province of Ontario. There was also £10,000 afterwards voted by the same Government for compensating the loyalists in the Province of Quebec, which was not considered sufficient by the people of Lower Canada. The then Draper Government was defeated and the Reform Government, formed by Baldwin and Lafontaine, voted £100,000 to compensate losses of that rebellion in Lower Canada. Again in 1873, during the administration of the Honourable Oliver Mowat, (now Sir Oliver) a committee was appointed to investigate the claims of the family of Robert Baldwin for losses sustained during the same rebellion, the payment of which was recommended. On March 22nd Attorney-General Mowat delivered to the Speaker a message from His Excellency Lieutenant-Governor Howland, which was read to the House. (Journals, Legislative Assembly, 1873, p. 309-10) transmitting the estimates for that year, and in the supplementary estimates is found this item:

"15—Trustees for Mrs. Baldwin and family in full of claim of late Colonel Baldwin on late Province of Upper Canada, \$4,000."

"This amount the Government of Ontario paid. You will also find on the 19th March, 1874, the Honourable Attorney-General Mowat delivered to Mr. Speaker a message from His Excellency Lieutenant-Governor Crawford transmitting the estimates for that year, and in the supplementary estimates is found this item:

"16—John Montgomery, compensation for claim against the Province of Upper Canada, \$3,000. (Journals, Legislative Assembly, 1874, p. 232.)

"If these were not within the jurisdiction of the Province of Ontario, Mr. Mowat should not have paid them, and he has therefore violated his trust to the people by paying \$7,000 which he had no authority to pay. This is the case cited by Mr. Blake as a precedent, showing that the Provincial Governments are the parties who should pay the compensation to the veterans of the rebellion of 1837-8. The veterans have claimed that they were promised land and money. This being the case, the only lands that were in the possession of the Governments of that day were the lands in Ontario and Quebec. The lands that the veterans themselves say were promised them have been and are now the property of the Provincial Governments. I consider that they are really the parties who should compensate the veterans for their services in quelling the rebellion, which arose solely within the limits of these Provinces.

"In 1885, in the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, Mr.

Broder moved, seconded by Mr. Gray, that some suitable recognition should be made to the veterans of 1837-8 residing in the Province of Ontario. To this Mr. Mowat moved an amendment, expressing that he recognized the loyalty and services of the volunteers of 1837-8, who responded to the call then made upon them by the lawfully constituted authorities, but at the same time he expressed his recognition of the services of the rebels of that day. Attorney-General Mowat's amendment was carried by 36 to 32. The representative for Glengarry, I regret to say, voted against compensation being given to the good, true and loyal volunteers, not a few of whom were natives of and residents in Glengarry. The question again came up in 1892, when it was moved by Mr. Willoughby (as will be seen by extract and resolution printed herewith) that the Government should make some suitable recognition to the volunteers of '37-8. This motion was strongly opposed by the Government, and Provincial Secretary Gibson moved in amendment that owing to existing circumstances the veterans could not call for any further consideration from that house. Then Mr. Rayside moved an amendment to the amendment. He desired to add these words: "And this view is illustrated by the consideration that the Dominion Parliament took cognizance of the claims of the veterans of 1812." The latter carried, the vote being 41 to 20. As will be seen from this, Mr. Rayside succeeded in depriving the veterans of all chance of getting anything from the Local Legislature. Then Mr. Woods moved that the following words be added as an amendment to the main motion as amended, "But whether by this Legislature or by the Parliament of Canada, this House is of opinion that the recognition should at all events be made." This meant that the services of these brave men should be recognized by either the Federal or Provincial Parliament. But the Government also voted down this amendment, thus declaring themselves as being altogether opposed to the veterans receiving any compensation from any source.

"It will not be necessary for me to add anything to what is already set forth in the memorials, and in the short addresses which I delivered when the committee placed the matter before the Governor-General of Canada and the Governor-General-in-Council. In making this application for such recognition, we rested our case upon the fact that it was owing to the services of Canada's sons at that time in repelling the invaders from her soil that the honour and integrity of the British Empire in North America has been preserved to us.

"Thus it will be seen that it was on these grounds alone I could appeal to the Governor-General for recognition from Her Majesty's Imperial authorities, and that I could not appeal to him on the grounds of any internal disorder, or any rebellion of a local character—claims arising out of which should be dealt with by the Provincial authorities affected thereby. I have also made an appeal to the Dominion Government on the same grounds, namely, that the veterans of those days had repelled foreign invaders, and the probability is that but for their efforts we might have been absorbed in the republic of the United States.

"In regard to the questions asked in the House of Commons on the 9th May, 1887, regarding the pensions and granting of scrip to veterans who had served in 1837-8-9, as was done in the cases of the veterans of 1812, and those volunteers who had served in the North-West Rebellion, it will be observed that there is a very great difference between the later cases and the Rebellion of 1837. It was quite proper that the Federal Government alone should have dealt with the claims arising out of the War of 1812 and the North-west Rebellion. The War of 1812 was between the United States and British North America, in which the whole British Empire, as well as Canada, was concerned. The North-West was governed by the Dominion Government, who owned the lands and territories therein, and their Mounted Police, who were there for the preservation of the peace, and the maintenance of law and order in their different military posts, were attacked and shot at, murdered and slaughtered by the rebels. This was also a matter in which the Dominion as a whole was interested from every standpoint; and as owners of the property and land in those sections of the country where the rebellion took place, have paid compensation to their soldiers in land and scrip. Similar compensation or recognition should have been granted by the Governments of the Provinces of Ontario and Quebec, for the services rendered to them by the Volunteers of 1837-8.

"I have always maintained, and will ever maintain, that the