

V.R.I. Magazine

PUBLISHED BY THE V. R. I. CLUB.

EDITOR:

DEPUTY SURGEON GENERAL F. W. CAMPBELL,
ROYAL REGIMENT CANADIAN INFANTRY.

VOL. I.

MARCH, 1896.

No. 6.

SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS.

SECOND ANNUAL MEETING OF THE V. R. I. CLUB.

THE MILITARY INSTITUTE, QUEBEC.

29th January, 1896.

10.30 A.M.

Members Present:—Maj. Genl. Gascoigne, Patron, Lt.-Col. Irwin, President; Lt.-Col. Montizambert; Deputy Surgeons General Neilson, Campbell and Sewell; Lt.-Col. F. Wilson; Majors Rutherford and Farley; Captains Rivers, and J. A. Fages, R.C.A., A. O. Fages, R.R.C.I; O. Pelletier, R.C.A.; Lieuts. Ogilvy, Thacker and Benyon, R.C.A.; Major D. Young, R.R.C.I.

The President in the chair.

The proceedings of the first Annual Meeting being condensed into the Constitution, it was decided not to read them at length.

The President stated that this second Annual Meeting had been postponed to this date,—1st, on account of the absence from Canada of Major General Herbert, who had requested that the meeting should be held in August, 1895; 2nd, as the recent arrival of his successor, Major Genl. Gascoigne, who had kindly consented to become Patron of the Club, did not permit him to meet the Club at an earlier date; 3rd, it was believed, that the reduced fares offered by railroad companies during the Carnival might be an additional inducement to members to attend.

The President offered formal thanks to Major General Gascoigne for consenting to become Patron of the Club. He read letters from Lt.-Col. Smith, London, Ont., and others, relative to their ab-

sence from the meeting ; the former expressed a strong hope that the organization shall be maintained, but advocated reduced subscriptions.

Major General Gascoigne said it gave him infinite pleasure to be present at this meeting. He deferred further expression of his own thoughts and views until later, when he shall have heard members discuss freely the matters to be considered by the meeting. It would be of deep interest to him to listen to these discussions, and he hoped that views and opinions would be expressed with perfect freedom, etc.

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS.

The President then read the following Address :

1. In view of the fact that a more or less general expression of doubt exists amongst the officers of the Permanent Corps, as to the advisability or otherwise, of continuing the organization known as the V.R.I. Club—and the Magazine published periodically in connection therewith, I have thought it advisable to offer the following observations for your consideration, and to invite your serious consideration as to the advantages which may be gained by co-operation and mutual discussion of the best means of increasing our efficiency and usefulness.

2. The original object of the first nucleus of the corps, as formed by the establishment of A. and B. Batteries in 1871, was for the purpose of providing for the care and protection of the military properties, stores, etc., taken over from the Imperial Government, and also for securing the establishment of schools of military instruction.

These schools were considered to have had such a successful result in the case of the Artillery of the Active Militia, that the principle of their establishment was followed, in 1883, by the organization of cavalry and infantry schools, consisting of permanently paid troops and companies.

3. Several different views have been taken by those in authority from time to time, as to the sphere of usefulness which these corps might be expected to fill, apart from their admitted functions as schools of instruction.

4. They appear to have been originally looked upon as forming nuclei for the formation of regiments of cavalry and battalions of infantry, and, in consequence, their organization and establishment was, with this end in view, based upon a regimental system.

Subsequently, and when it appeared probable that no increase in the establishment was likely to be authorized, they were, with the exception of the artillery, considered and treated as entirely independent units with instructional duties only. The most recent view, and the one which has led to much mis-conception on the part of the general public, is that these corps should be organized, and equipped as fighting units, and trained individually to the highest possible standard. Their duties as instructors to the Active Militia were to be considered as subsidiary to the above, and were in fact only participated in by a small portion of the unit itself.

5. Now, with regard to the above, so long as the schools did their duty as such, and that no attempt was made by their officers to claim exclusive privileges or rank, they were very generally let alone by the general public, and the Militia generally, the only ripples on the general calm being caused by some of the first appointments to the corps being made without any apparent fitness or qualification on the part of the applicant. When, however, the last mentioned view as to our sphere of usefulness began to be generally appreciated, when officers and men attending the courses of instruction found themselves segregated into what are termed "attached units," and their participation in the benefits of the school limited to the instruction to be derived from a subaltern in charge, and two or three non-commissioned officers, public opinion, as represented by officers and men of the Militia who gained the ear of their representatives in Parliament, and members of the government, seem to have taken the alarm, and when the question of reducing the Militia expenditure was considered, the Permanent Corps were selected as the first victims, and it was generally argued that as Instructional Corps, under the existing system, 500 of all ranks would be ample for the purpose.

6. Now, if the foregoing remarks at all represent the true state of the case, it is very evident that in order to re-establish the true status of the Permanent Corps, and to emphasize the value of the instruction which can only be obtained through their means, and which is indispensable to the officers and men of the Active Militia, immediate steps should be taken to make it very clearly understood by everyone interested in the Militia, that the true sphere of usefulness of our Corps is primarily that of schools of instruction for the rest of the Active Militia. Everything else should be subordinated to this purpose. All the officers, non-commissioned

officers and men of the unit should take their share in the courses of instruction, and all isolation of officers and men attached for instruction should be most carefully avoided.

7. The thorough adoption of this principle will, I believe, be found the best means of preparing all ranks for their ultimate and most important duty in time of actual service, and that is, with the possible exception of A. and B. Batteries, not to form independent fighting units, nor to become the nuclei of cavalry regiments or infantry battalions, but to furnish officers and non-commissioned officers for the staff of the army which Canada may be able to mobilize.

There will be abundance of room for every trained officer or man that the Permanent Corps can supply—and from no other source can equally efficient soldiers be looked for.

8. Now, with regard to this association itself, and the benefits or otherwise which we may expect to derive from its continuance, in the first place, the feeling of comradeship and *esprit de corps*, cannot, I think, but be helped by the meeting of officers, who can mutually discuss points of interest relative to their corps. The admission of staff officers not belonging to the Permanent Corps will, I hope, tend to dispel the feeling or spirit of exclusiveness, with which I think we are unjustly charged. You will see a notice of motion to this effect which will come up for subsequent discussion.

9. There cannot help but be certain divergence of opinion amongst commandants of the different schools as to the exact lines upon which they are to be run, and whilst recognizing the impossibility of obtaining one exactly uniform system in matters of minor detail, I cannot help thinking that a meeting such as this should enable officers to agree upon what they consider as the result of their experience, should be the general system, and that the General officer commanding the Militia will thus obtain a better insight into the feelings and aspirations of these representative units.

10. Quite apart, however, from the social and other aspects of our annual meeting, I consider that the V.R.I. MAGAZINE, about which so much has been said, and in which so little has been written, has a most important function to fill. Instead of being in competition with other more or less domestic publications, with which, no matter how ably edited, it cannot possibly compete, either in extent of circulation, variety of subjects, and choice of matter, it has, or may have, a peculiar function of its own in which it has no competitor, and in which it will supply a long felt want.

I refer more particularly to its functions as a military guide and *educator*, and, in the first place, would suggest that each number should contain copies of the actual examination questions which have been given at the different schools—for short and special courses, or as many of them as room can conveniently be found for.

Every officer intending to go up for examination would naturally require a copy. The answers given to the various questions would arouse interest in others who had previously been to the schools, and questions of drill, tactics and interior economy and discipline might hope to be more freely discussed than they apparently are at present.

Add to this some few articles from the pens of those officers who have already shown their ability to write clearly and forcibly, upon the general work of a school—routine of daily duties, military correspondence and reports, hints to officers, etc., etc., and such items of regimental news from each unit as will be of interest to all—and I have no doubt but that the *MAGAZINE* will quickly become a most interesting and useful compilation, and will increase the general interest in the Permanent Corps.

A long discussion now took place, some doubting the practical utility of the Club and Magazine to the Force it was intended to serve, some that it was even responsible for a certain amount of jealousy and hostility to the Permanent Force, which, it was asserted, existed among the Militia at large, more particularly in cities. Lt.-Cols. Montizambert and Wilson, Lt. Tinker, Capt. A. O. Fages, Major Young, Major Farley, Deputy Surgeons General Campbell and Neilson, fully discussed these views, the two latter asserted that in their own Militia Districts, Nos. 3, 5 and 6, no such feeling of hostility existed—quite the reverse. Dr. Campbell said, if they existed at all, they must be local, and he asked whether social reasons, perhaps an accidental or intentional omission at an entertainment or function, was not answerable for the alleged local bitterness.

The sense of the meeting was overwhelmingly in favour of maintaining the V.R.I. Club and *MAGAZINE*. One of the speakers said it would show a great want of appreciation of Major General Herbert's efforts in behalf of the Permanent Corps, and the V.R.I. in particular, if the organization were allowed to lapse.

Major General Gascoigne said he had listened with very special interest to the discussion which had just taken place. There was matter for mutual congratulation in the decision arrived at to maintain the V.R.I. Club. To himself, these meetings—in a manner

confidential and free from newspaper reporters—gave him an unequalled opportunity of coming in closer touch with the officers of the Permanent Corps. In these meetings he trusted they would always express their views freely on all matters, whether personal or regarding the service. Much information would be laid before him in this way which could never reach him through official channels. On the other hand, as head of the Force, and with his knowledge of causes and motives behind the scenes, he would be in a position to give hints and advice which should be of importance to all. He was pleased to see seniors and juniors take part in the recent discussion, even to hear one of the latter give free expression to his opinions, although evidently not those of the majority of those present, and opposed to his own (the General's) personal views and wishes.

Deputy Surgeon General Neilson thought that after hearing these words from the General, no one present could entertain any further doubt as to the practical utility of the V.R.I. Club. He trusted that from this moment the Club would be *galvanized into new life*. In future, additional interest and importance would be given to these meetings. The needs of the Force, its grievances, its aspirations could be freely discussed, while the remarks and advice of the G. O. C. made in the intimacy of these meetings would be of vast benefit to the Force.

Major General Gascoigne here remarked that some were under the misapprehension that the Permanent Force was the nucleus of a Regular Army;—it was not so. The Permanent Force was created and exists for the Militia, to act as instructors to the Militia, and it would be well for the officers of the Permanent Force not to lose sight of this fundamental fact. With this fact in view, it might be well to consider whether it would not be well to somewhat enlarge the field of usefulness of the V.R.I. Club by widening its circle of membership, and he was pleased to see a notice of motion in the last number of the V.R.I. MAGAZINE which would constitute a distinct move in that direction.

(See notice of Motion V.R.I. MAGAZINE No. 5, page 209.)

MOTION—HONORARY MEMBERS.

Proposed by the President, seconded by Lt.-Col. Maunsell, that the following addition be made to Rule III "Membership" in the Constitution of the V.R.I. Club :

(c) *Honorary Members*, Officers serving in the Head Quarters or District Staff, who may be elected by ballot at any general or special meeting.

AMENDMENT—FULL MEMBERS.

Proposed by Lt.-Col. Montizambert, seconded by Lt.-Col. F. Wilson, that these officers be eligible to become full members.

AMENDMENT CARRIED.

The motion and amendment were discussed and subsequently *carried* in its amended form, by a unanimous vote.

Notice of Motion by Major Farley, seconded by Deputy Surgeon General Sewell, that Officers commanding Regiments, Battalions or Field Batteries be eligible to become Honorary Members of the V.R.I. Club, the same to be considered at the next annual meeting.

MOTION—SUBSCRIPTION REDUCED.

Proposed by Captain T. Benson, seconded by Captain Fages, R.R.C.I., that Article V. of the Constitution, "Subscription," be changed as follows :

"The subscription shall be one day's pay per annum, payable in advance on the 1st of January of each year."

To be considered at a special meeting:

V.R.I. MAGAZINE.

Notice of motion by Lt.-Col. Montizambert, seconded by Deputy Surgeon General Sewell, that in view of the reduced subscription the publication of the V.R.I. MAGAZINE be temporarily suspended, and that it be replaced by the occasional publication of papers of nearer interest to the Force when funds will permit.

To be considered at next "Special Meeting."

ACCOUNTS AND MONEYS.

Captains Imlah, R. C. A., and A. O. Fages, R.R.C.I., having been appointed auditors to verify the Secretary-Treasurer's books and statement, reported that they had found them correct.

MOTION—ACCOUNTS PASSED.

Proposed by Lt.-Col. Montizambert, seconded by Capt. Rivers, that the Secretary-Treasurer's accounts be passed and accepted.—*Carried, nem. con.*

MOTION—RE-ELECTION OF OFFICERS.

Proposed by Lt.-Col. Montizambert, seconded by Major Farley, that the Secretary-Treasurer be directed to cast a ballot re-electing to office with the thanks of the meeting, the officers elected at the first annual meeting, and who have performed their various duties in such an efficient manner.—*Carried* unanimously.

MOTION—NEW MEMBERS.

Proposed by the President, seconded by Lt.-Col. Montizambert, that Lt.-Cols. T. Duchesnay and Forest of the District Staff be elected members of the V.R.I. Club.—*Carried* unanimously.

STANDING VOTE TO GEN. GASCOIGNE.

A standing vote of thanks was now tendered to the G.O.C. for his consenting to become Patron of the V.R.I. Club, and for his kindly advice as well as for the interest he has taken in the proceedings of the meeting.

Major General Gascoigne acknowledged this vote in well chosen words, and added that it was no exaggeration to say that he had followed the proceedings with the very greatest interest. He was more than ever convinced of the great practical utility of such an organization among the officers of the Permanent Corps, and he was pleased to add now, and of the General Staff. I feel sure, he said, that it will prove a most powerful factor in promoting *esprit de corps* as well as general efficiency, and in looking towards these results the V.R.I. MAGAZINE can be made to fill a most potent factor; so convinced am I on this point, that I shall have much pleasure, while in command of the Militia of Canada, in contributing annually \$250.00 towards its support and maintenance.

Resolved, that the Major General's most generous subscription be accepted with expressions of deep gratitude and appreciation of his good will toward the V.R.I. Club.

ADJOURNMENT TO 31ST INST.

It being 1 p.m., and owing to the many engagements of the G.O.C., the Club adjourned until to-morrow at 4.30 p.m.

It is resolved that the members of the Club dine together at the Officers Mess, R.C.A. Citadel, Quebec, to-morrow at 7.30 o'clock, and that the Major and General and A.D.C. be invited as guests of the V.R.I. Club.

V.R.I. CLUB.

Adjourned 2nd Annual Meeting.

MILITARY INSTITUTE.

QUEBEC, January 30, 1896.

Present: Major General Gascoigne, patron; Lt.-Col. Irwin, Deputy Surgeon General Campbell, Captain Fages, R.C.A.; Capt. A. O. Fages, R.R.C.I.; Capt. Benson, Major Farley, Lt. Benyon, Lt. Thacker, Majors Rutherford and Young, Captain Rivers, Lt.-Cols. Montizambert and Wilson, Deputy Surgeon General Neilson.

MOTION.

Proposed by Lt.-Col. Montizambert, seconded by Major Young, that the Secretary be instructed to write to all officers of the Head Quarters and District Staff, inviting them to become members of the V.R.I. Club, and to empower him to cast a ballot in favour of such who desire to be come members.—*Carried, nem. con.*

3RD ANNUAL MEETING.

The place of the next annual meeting was now discussed. Deputy Surgeon General Neilson thought that Kingston was central and an important military station, offering much of interest to visitors. He was sure that the officers at that station would give the members of the Club the most hearty welcome.

The members of the Club appreciated the invitation, but St. Johns, P.Q., was thought more central and more important in a strategic sense, and following motion carried.

MOTION TO MEET AT ST. JOHNS, P.Q.

Proposed by Captain A. O. Fages, R.R.C.I., seconded by Major Young, R.R.C.I., that the next Annual General Meeting take place at St. Johns, P.Q., at a date in May, to be fixed hereafter.—*Carried, nem. con.*

MOTION.

Proposed by Lt.-Col. Wilson, seconded by Captain Rivers, that in consequence of Major Sheppard's long connection with "B" Battery (old R.S.G.), he be considered eligible for membership, and is now proposed as a member of the V.R.I. Club.—*Carried, nem. con.*

ADJOURNMENT.

Proposed by Deputy Surgeon General Campbell, seconded by Capt. Fages, that the meeting does now adjourn until May next.—*Carried.*