

of 1896, money to pay for the new weapons was not requested for fear of publicising the country's defenceless state.

361. In the midst of the crisis, the Militia Department lost its Minister and its Adjutant-General. Under protest, Walker Powell left office on 1 January 1896, complaining about the superannuation he was allowed.⁷⁵² No successor was appointed, and the elderly Matthew Aylmer took over temporary responsibility for the office. On 4 January 1896, partly as a result of domestic crises, partly because of the new dangers of the Venezuela crisis, seven members of the cabinet determined to show their lack of confidence in the Prime Minister by submitting their resignations directly to the Governor General. Among the so-called "nest of traitors" was Arthur Dickey. After over a week of negotiations during which no policy could be made, the Government was reformed, with Sir Charles Tupper being brought back from the Canadian High Commission in London to be the leader in the House of Commons. Dickey replaced Charles Hibbert Tupper as Minister of Justice and the new Minister of Militia and Defence was Senator Alphonse Desjardins. The new Minister was the least competent of all those who had held the portfolio. He knew nothing about military affairs save for such experience as he may have acquired in helping to organize the Papal Zouaves. Despite what appeared to be the most serious military crisis in over thirty years, Desjardins took little interest in the affairs of his Department and continued to spend two days each week in Montreal, attending to his personal business

362. In these circumstances, Gascoigne, who by training and background, had to take the situation seriously, could be excused for writing in desperation to Sir Redvers Buller, the Adjutant General at the War Office. What he sought was advice. Was there any agreement which compelled Canada to play a reasonable part in her own defence or was England

prepared to bear the whole burden? If there was no agreement, he would be prepared to do his best by moral persuasion and by influence, should he gain any, to improve the Militia and to obstruct political influence. If there was an agreement, it was his duty to point out that Canada was keeping it in no essential. When he had come out, it had not seemed likely that Canada would face anything more formidable than Fenians but now there was a risk of full scale war. The British might take the situation seriously but the Canadians simply got rid of the Adjutant-General and allowed the Minister to resign without replacing him for ten days. Since even the slightest expenditure had to be sanctioned by the Minister, his absence, or the presence of one who was entirely ignorant of Militia matters paralyzed business. He was left without a staff officer since Lake was in England. He asked that some authority should be given to the British officer in charge of the force:

At present, beyond the moral feeling of dislike of dislike to run counter to the opinion of the English Major-General: (a feeling which exists only as long as that Officer is not unpopular) that Officer has literally no power whatever: no power to promotion: no power of appointment: no power to prevent the most flagrant injustices: no power literally to do the smallest thing himself: and it is quite impossible without some semblance of power, for any man to be held responsible, for the well-being or otherwise of a force, only nominally under him.

This was not all. He had no control over munitions, stores and fortifications as these were absolutely under the Deputy Minister. Yet nothing was in worse condition. The forts were in decay and none were under the care of more than one man. The gun carriages were rotting rapidly under the effects of the climate. There was no supervision of arms and it was for that reason that he had urged the purchase of the Martini-Enfield. Public pressure had persuaded the Government to buy the more
753
delicate Lee-Enfield.

363. What Gascoigne was in effect asking his British superiors by this letter was whether he should care. Their answer was no. When Buller replied over a month later, he

had consulted the Commander in Chief and the Secretary of State for War. The latter, Lord Lansdowne, had consulted the Colonial Secretary, Joseph Chamberlain. The Venezuela crisis had passed and their concensus was that the time was inopportune to stir up controversy. They were well aware of the political situation in Canada and could only hope for an improvement of opportunity in the near future. In the meantime, the two Secretaries had agreed that the Governor General might help the General by "taking him into his confidence and by suggesting when it was expedient to press any particular reform and when more expedient not to attempt anything and keep quiet."⁷⁵⁴

364. Meanwhile, Gascoigne worked hard in attempting to ready the Militia for possible war. A new defence scheme was worked out in haste, in which individual units were assigned to divisions the brigades or to garrisons. Plans were also made for the selection and formation of staffs. In both cases, the actual details were kept secret and the units and individuals were only to be informed in the event of emergency.^{*} Mobilization instructions were also worked out for the first time, laying down somewhat sketchily what commanding officer would be expected to do. They appear to have been largely the work of Captain Arthur H. Lee, R.A., the Professor of Strategy and Tactics at the Royal Military College. During the training in the following autumn, Captain Lee gave lectures on his mobilization instructions at six camps.⁷⁵⁵

365. In his letter to Buller, Gascoigne had grumbled about the many diversions of his attention:

* One precaution was to ask Deputy Adjutants-General to ensure that all battalions had efficient second-in-command since the best of the commanding officers would be required for the staff. Seniority alone would not justify selection although they were warned to avoid friction.

[RG 9 II B 1 599, 49, Assistant Adjutant General to all Deputy Adjutants-General, 27 February 1896.]

It is almost like dealing with children: at the very time when large sums of money are being voted, and matters of national importance should be discussed, my time is taken up by discussing whether some officer is or is not entitled to wear some badge, or worse still, by being perpetrated on some officer politically weak. 756

In the middle of his work for mobilization planning, Gascoigne was forced to divert his attention to the affairs of two of the most wealthy and efficient of the city regiments, the 2nd Queen's Own Rifles of Toronto and the 5th Royal Scots of Montreal. In both cases, the officers of the regiments were at odds with the commanding officer.

366. In the case of the Queen's own Rifles, the regimental fund had gotten into some difficulties. Although the finances of the regiment were in the hands of a committee of three officers, many of the officers tended to blame the commanding officer, Lieutenant Colonel R.B. Hamilton. Their feelings were possibly aggravated by the fact that the colonel had held his command for seven years, despite a tradition in the regiment of limiting tenure to five years. Colonel Hamilton was also a man of limited personal fortune and social standing, occupying the modest civil position of Inspector of Vital Statistics for the province. Matters reached a head at the annual meeting of officers in 1896. Several senior officers withdrew their names from the regimental bond and the Dominion Bank promptly refused to cash cheques on the account. The senior non-commissioned officers also held a meeting to discuss their grievances and, when Hamilton intervened, the Regimental Sergeant Major resigned. Gascoigne arranged that the Deputy Adjutant General of M.D. 2 should investigate the affairs of the regiment. Since Colonel Otter had himself been a popular and effective commanding officer of the regiment, he might be expected to know the best solution. Rather than hold a formal enquiry, he approached a number of the officers, found out as much as he could about the situation and made a full report to Ottawa that Hamilton

Hamilton should be replaced. Gascoigne accepted this advice⁷⁵⁷ and Hamilton was asked to resign.

367. The case with the 5th Royal Scots of Montreal was rather different. The Montreal battalions had consistently been less efficient than those of Toronto and when Lieutenant Colonel J.A.L. Strathy took command of the 5th Royal Scots, he determined to demand new standards of discipline and training. Strathy was personally a wealthy man, a businessman and stock broker, and he had contributed a good deal to the regiment at a time when it was fitting itself out with full Scottish regalia including feather bonnets. His efforts to improve military efficiency, however, did not make him more popular than Colonel Hamilton. The complaints of the officers quickly made their way into the press. Captain Lydons, the adjutant and an elderly veteran of the British Army, backed the commanding officer and recommended to him that he should get rid of the malcontents. His opponent was Major E.B. Ibbotson, a prominent dental surgeon and the senior major of the Regiment. The trouble was precipitated on 21 March 1896 when Strathy sent a circular to all his officers, reminding him that the Militia was Canada's only line of defence and that the administration of the regiment, which had been that of a club, would revert to principles of strict military discipline. When they received this notice, officers began to send in their resignations in such numbers that the regiment was in danger of complete disruption. Gascoigne was directed by the Minister to make a series of trips to Montreal to attempt to patch up a form of truce and this,⁷⁵⁸ he believed, he had accomplished.

368. There was much that was similar in the two cases but there were two things that were different. In one case, the commanding officer had been repudiated at the behest of at least some of his officers, in the other,

he had been sustained and, at the expense of some time and effort on the part of the General Officer Commanding, peace had been restored. The second difference seemed more important in the circumstances of 1896. Colonel Hamilton was a well known Liberal and Colonel Strathy was an equally prominent Conservative. With the Liberals attempting to talk a superannuated and disarrayed Conservative Government to death, the two cases provided a suitable opportunity. The Liberals were given powerful encouragement when it became evident that Colonel Hamilton was not prepared to be pushed out of his command.

369. On Saturday, 18 April 1896, the House spent the whole day debating a motion to adjourn brought forward by William Mulock because of the condition of the Militia. There was a lengthy series of grievances. The case of Colonel Lazier was raised again to remind the Government that the charges raised the previous year had since been repudiated and the colonel had been honourably discharged. Mulock was particularly indignant about Hamilton. The Colonel had been given no opportunity to hear the charges against him. He had been deposed by a cabal of his officers. His own charges against several of his subalterns had not been investigated. From Hamilton, Mulock turned to the Royal Military College. Subsequent reports, including those of the Auditor General and the Board of Visitors, had borne out all that he had said the year before and worse. The prestige of Sandford Fleming was invoked to give a particular weight to his dissenting report.⁷⁵⁹ The Government's reply was given by Arthur Dickey since the Minister was in the Senate. He had a difficult case and about Hamilton he could say very little. On the Military College, he could only emphasize how much of the majority report had been favourable to the institution and repeat the praises⁷⁶⁰ of its graduates. Even that somewhat independent Con-

servative, Colonel William O'Brien, was enlisted in support of Colonel Hamilton. He went on to add the vacancy in the office of Adjutant General to the list of the Government's failings. At a moment of crisis, the post had been left vacant and was still vacant three and a half months later. He even brought up the offer of the Canadian Permanent troops to Britain some eighteen months before:

Of all the preposterous and ridiculous proposals that was the most ridiculous. Made in such a form as it was, it did strike me as the most preposterous bit of bombast that ever was perpetrated. 761

It was a difficult day for the Government as member after member rose to attack every part of its military administration. The old reports of General Herbert were finally drawn on to prove the decay of the force. Some of the attacks were directed against General Gascoigne for his different handling of the Hamilton and Strathy cases and his unfortunate success in getting his remarks quoted in the newspapers. The most violent condemnation came from "Fighting Joe" Lister, the vigorous prosecutor of General Middleton and Sir Hector Langevin. For Gascoigne's behaviour to Hamilton, he demanded nothing less than immediate dismissal:

Sir, we have had these generals over here, two or three of them, of late years. We had General Middleton here and he had to leave. We had a general after him and it was found convenient for him to leave. And now we have another general who has only been in the country for a very few months and almost the first act he does is an act so unjustifiable, so tyrannical, so arbitrary, as stamps him, I believe, as unfit to occupy the position to which he has been appointed. 762

Nothing brought the debate to a close but the coincidence of Sunday morning and the members's sabbatarian principles.

370 Three days later, the Government produced a second lengthy military discussion by bringing in a bill

* Colonel O'Brien, as a prominent supporter of the Imperial Federation League, might have been expected to look on such arrangements with greater favour than other of his colleagues.

to provide for a loan of \$3,000,000 to pay for the rifles and guns which Lake had been sent to buy some months before. There was some objection by Opposition spokesmen to the Government's rashness in purchasing a rifle as new and untried as the Lee-Enfield and there was some indignation when Dickey was forced to admit that there had not even been an attempt to have equipment and saddlery manufactured in Canada. David Mills made the case that the Martini bullet was a far more reliable man killer than the Lee-Enfield. The main criticism, however, was that the Government should spend the money and then seek to obtain it from Parliament in the last days of the session. Some Liberals, particularly James Lister and Louis Davies, attempted to rally their colleagues on an issue of principles but without success.

371. With the Government fighting for its life in Parliament, with a Minister "who knows nothing of the Militia: beyond the fact that it is an opportunity to fill every possible place with his supporters", it is astonishing that anything at all was achieved. One development which Desjardins allowed was the appointment of an Inspector of Cavalry and two Inspectors of Infantry. The posts were given to Major F.L. Lessard for the cavalry and to Lieutenant Colonels Otter and Maunsell for the Infantry. On 1 May 1896, the Government was reconstructed on the resignation of Sir Mackenzie Bowell. Sir Charles Tupper became Prime Minister and, in an effort to strengthen his representation, Senator Desjardins was given the more attractive portfolio of Public Works. Colonel David Tisdale proved to be the only possible appointment Tupper could make from Ontario and he was appointed Minister of Militia. Like the remainder of the Ministry, he was to hold office for less than seventy days. About the only thing that he could do was to give the city corps the four extra days of drill

pay which they had missed the year before. ⁷⁶⁶ Other decisions, such as the future of Colonel Hamilton, were left until the election results were known.

372. When they were known, Wilfrid Laurier and the Liberals were the victors. Tupper and his Cabinet resigned on 8 July 1896, having created a constitutional issue, and Laurier announced the formation of his government on 13 July. Among the first of the ministers to be named was Minister of Militia and Defence, Dr. Frederick W. Borden. In discussing the formation of Laurier's first cabinet, his biographer has observed: "It was not a difficult task to find sufficient cabinet timber. The difficulty was rather an embarrassment of riches." ⁷⁶⁷ This does not seem to apply directly to Dr. Borden. He was a Nova Scotia Liberal who had acquired considerable seniority in the House and who might therefore serve as his province's representative. He was a medical doctor, who had trained at King's College in Windsor and at Harvard University. He returned and set up his practice at Canning, Nova Scotia in 1869. Almost immediately he joined the 68th Battalion as assistant surgeon and had risen in the Militia until he had been made the principal medical officer at Aldershot camp in 1888. In 1874, he had been elected to the House of Commons and, except for a defeat in 1882, had remained in the House ever since. John Buchan, in his biography of Lord Minto, described Borden as "neither a courageous nor an able man" who "conceived his duties as a balancing of party interests and a judicious exercise of party patronage." ⁷⁶⁹ The judgement seems too harsh. Patronage was a part of Canadian public life and it would have taken superhuman qualities to have driven them from the Militia Department. Borden was a man of his times. His political training had been in a province in which patronage was at a franker and opener level than in some others. It would be fairer to say that

he inherited a system which he did not choose to challenge but which he occasionally sought to moderate.

373. The Department was in urgent need of a Minister when Borden arrived. The work for the year was at a standstill. The camps for the year had not been authorized. On 6 July 1896, Headquarters received a telegram from the Officer Commanding the Infantry School at London. There was no money to pay the troops for the current year. The first message the new Minister received from Gascoigne was to draw his attention to the seriousness of the situation. "It must be borne in mind that these units of the p[ermanent] Corps are all over the Dominion, and it might become a very serious matter if trouble were to arise among armed men."⁷⁷⁰*

374. Another problem which had remained for six months was the appointment of a new Adjutant-General. Arthur Dickey had originally intended to promote the Assistant Adjutant-General, Lieutenant Colonel Aylmer, but he had resigned before it could be done. When Desjardins took office, feeling had been aroused among the Conservative members because many of Aylmer's relatives were known to be Liberals. The appointment was postponed and a warm struggle developed for the highest military post available to a Canadian. Lieutenant Colonel Otter at Toronto was regarded as the most eligible candidate since he had maintained a

* Gascoigne himself, never one to dissemble his feelings, revealed his relief in a letter to Laurier on the morrow of his electoral triumph.

... I may tell you that I have been patiently waiting and hoping for a change; and if no change, or at least no change in the methods of doing business had occurred, I had fully made up my mind to resign.

He went on to tell the Liberal leader that he owed his victory more to the Militia vote than might be admitted as he had heard in conversations with prominent and normally Conservative Militia officers. All that he asked was to be sent a Minister "who will take a real broad interest in the Militia, and, above all, one who is likely to stay." 770A

high military reputation and had been the one Canadian senior officer both to command a column in the Northwest Campaign and to attend courses recently in Great Britain. Two Conservative members, Lieutenant Colonels O'Brien and Tyrwhitt promoted his case.⁷⁷¹ Sam Hughes, now a lieutenant-colonel as well, and possessing rather more influence, made himself the protagonist of Lieutenant Colonel Henry Smith of M.D. 1 at London. In a typically frank letter to Otter, Hughes explained why he had chosen to back Smith:

He has always exercised his rights as a free-man and voted for his party. More than that he has, without injury or loss of time or service to the force, always contributed loyally more than his means would admit of, sometimes, for the old party.

Otter, on the other hand, was suspected of having "inclined towards grittism" through helping two Liberals, Lawrence Buchan and William Mutton, to obtain permanent commissions.⁷⁷² With Borden in office, Aylmer's relatives were no hinderance to him and within a week, he had been confirmed as Adjutant-General retroactively.⁷⁷³

375. There were other changes as well. There was no further reason to preserve General Cameron as Commandant at the Royal Military College and his resignation was accepted on 25 August 1896.⁷⁷⁴ The Liberals had little mercy on him. He was given a gratuity of two month's pay and his transportation to anywhere in Canada. At the other end of the scale, Thomas McKenzie, who had been made caretaker of the Sussex camp ground on his retirement from the Infantry School, was removed in favour of another who had the favour of the Liberal member and given another post at two thirds the salary.⁷⁷⁵ Another change reflected less evident partisanship. The command of the Royal Canadian Regiment of Infantry had been exercised, since its formation, by the Adjutant-General in Ottawa. It was decided that it could be better exercised by one of the officers of the Regiment itself and on 4 September, 1896, Lieutenant Colonel George Maunsell was appointed to the command.⁷⁷⁶

376. The camps for that year could only be announced in orders which appeared on 24 August. This gave the units which were selected even less time than usual to get prepared. Since there had actually been no camps for over a year and since the units which were chosen had in many cases not trained for well over two years, the difficulties of commanding officers were increased. However those units which were called out only lacked 700 men out of a full authorized strength of just over 10,000.⁷⁷⁷ Some regimental camps were permitted. An innovation for the year was a booklet of detailed tables of daily routine for cavalry, artillery and infantry units, laying down in detail the subjects which would be covered and on what day. Reveille was at 5.30 a.m. for all corps, with the infantry drilling from 7.30 a.m. to 12.00 noon and again from 2.00 p.m. to 4.30 p.m.⁷⁷⁸ Lights out was at 10.15 p.m.

376. When Parliament opened at the end of August, the Conservatives found themselves on an unaccustomed side of the House. Arthur Dickey had been defeated in Cumberland but the Conservatives had no shortage of critics of the Militia Department. Sir Adolphe Caron had been returned for another riding and David Tisdale had also be re-elected. More and more, however, the Conservative leadership was seized by the assertive Orangeman from Lindsay, Lieutenant Colonel Sam Hughes, commanding officer of the 45th Battalion. It was from other Conservatives, however, that the first criticisms of the new Government were to come.

377. On 11 September 1896, Major Thomas Beattie, the Member for London took advantage of a supply motion to raise the matter of liberal patronage at the camp then being held in London. The Conservative merchants had not even been permitted to tender for contracts. What was worse, an alien had obtained one of the contracts. This led to an interesting discussion of patronage and a recital of as

many injustices as Liberal members could recall from the previous regime. Borden revealed, for example, that the previous government had entered into contracts for as long as three years on the eve of its defeat and that one of them only began in July, 1897. These contracts had been annulled by the Minister of Justice to the great indignation of the ⁷⁷⁹ Opposition.

378. There was even greater indignation at the dismissal of Cameron. Once again, advantage was taken of a Supply motion, this time by Henry Powell, a member from New Brunswick. There was a dual complaint, that Cameron had been dismissed without a chance to defend himself and that, for an officer of his advanced age and rank, the gratuity was not reasonable. Powell did not strengthen his case by adopting a somewhat offensive manner to the Government but it was already fatally weakened by the previous Government's decision to conceal the additional reports which had condemned Cameron. Whether or not the Liberals could have resisted the temptation to remove Tupper's son-in-law, the concealed reports left them very little alternative and if the unfortunate General had not been informed of the case against him, he had only his friends to blame. However, even a Liberal agreed that the elderly officer had been somewhat meanly dealt with and the Government announced that the travelling expenses would also extend to carrying Cameron ⁷⁸⁰ to England should he so desire.

379. Another change which Borden made at the request of his Departmental staff was that the annual report once again covered the calendar rather than the fiscal year. This was a difficulty for the Militia Department and the routine was to change again before the end of Borden's period in office. The Government's fiscal year ended in June but this cut the Militia's ~~t~~rain^{ing} year at a crucial

moment since many of the camps were held in June and July to suit the agricultural season. Not only did the report appear late so as to give some account of the year's training but the fiscal year itself made it difficult to conduct training at the most suitable time of the year. An appropriation for training which began to be spent in July would have very little flexibility twelve months later.

380. The report for 1896 was Gascoigne's first. It showed a total expenditure of \$2,136,713, although \$1,000,000 of this was due to the special expenditure on arms and ammunition. The Deputy Minister began what was to be a lengthy and sustained appeal for a militia stores building for Ottawa. The accommodation which was then occupied had been sold for use as a railway station and until a new building was erected, a ticket office, waiting room and restaurant shared the roof with classified stores of a value of over \$200,000.⁷⁸¹ In Gascoigne's report, there was praise for both the permanent force and the Active Militia. For the former, he was working on a pension plan and for the latter, there was reorganization. As a result of a new cavalry drill book, regiments were now organized in squadrons rather than troops while the artillery field batteries were changing from four guns to six. All was not perfect, however, and the necessity of training all the Militia annually was again urged with what fervency and eloquence he could muster.⁷⁸²

381. The new rifle brought the problems which Herbert had already anticipated. Although two new armourers had been employed because of them, they were both engaged in Quebec in uncrating and cleaning the weapons as they arrived. Gascoigne was not prepared to release them into the custody of Militia units until he was certain that they would be cared for properly. While some armouries had caretakers, nothing

had been done over the years to ensure that they were responsible or competent. The rate of pay ensured that the bulk of such men would be the humblest sort of political appointees. Many units did not have even this doubtful service and the captains of rural companies were still inclined to keep equipment in woodsheds and attics for the 102 weeks out of every two years that it was not in use. As serious a problem was the lack of ranges Herbert had pointed out this problem but no notice had been taken of it. Practically every range in Canada had to be rebuilt to make it safe for the high velocity bullet which had been adopted. Because this could not be done, the Militia was to spend the next few years struggling with Morris tubes and other devices to allow small bore shooting.⁷⁸³

382. A problem which the previous government had made some effort to tackle was equipment. The problem had been raised by successive General Officers Commanding and in his very first report, General Luard had recommended that the Canadian Government adopt a pattern which had been developed by Surgeon Major Oliver.⁷⁸⁴ There was a certain potential for domestic pride in the Oliver equipment since the inventor, William Silver Oliver, had been the medical officer of the 60th Rifles during the Red River Expedition and he was serving at Halifax at the time Luard recommended him. His equipment had been designed according to the most scientific principles and had been tried by troops of the 52nd Light Infantry and the Rifle Brigade with evident satisfaction. The following year, Luard proffered a testimonial from the commanding officer of the 52nd⁷⁸⁵ while the year after, a picture of the equipment had been framed and was on display in the Adjutant-General's office.⁷⁸⁶ It was all in vain. Luard left and Middleton, his successor, was an advocate of the

valise equipment, then in use in the British Army.⁷⁸⁷ It was again to no effect and Canadian militiamen continued to suffer with their rotten and tarry knapsacks. When General Herbert came, he was content to ask for anything in the way of provided it was obtained quickly. The Oliver equipment continued to have a fair publicity, particularly in view of its partially Canadian origin. It was an even more powerful recommendation that the equipment had the support of Lord Wolseley. Dr. Oliver was anxious to sell his patent rights to Canada but he wanted \$12,000 for them. By 1896, he had reduced his price to \$10,000 and the Government, embarking on the expenditure of \$3,000,000 for arms and equipment, was persuaded by General Gascoigne to offer him \$5,000. Oliver accepted. Unfortunately for the smooth conclusion of the deal, the Liberals then entered office and the Order in Council was promptly cancelled. This aroused the Conservatives as well as the Liberals' own military rebel, Lieutenant Colonel James Domville, to protest. The problem was that faced by any Government - there were other types of equipment being offered and if one pattern was adopted, might something better appear the following month. It also seemed odd that a type of equipment which had been in existence for almost twenty years and which had such high praise from Lord Wolseley and Sir Redvers Buller had never been adopted by the British Army.⁷⁸⁸ Gascoigne, who had taken a personal interest in the adoption of the Oliver pattern,⁷⁸⁹ continued to press its case before his new Minister.

383. One of the major achievements of Gascoigne's tenure of command was the exchange of small units of the permanent corps with equivalent units of the British garrison at Halifax. For some time past the Halifax Militia had been involved with the garrison but Gascoigne was anxious to take

even greater advantage of the British regulars. The arrangements were made directly between Gascoigne and Lieutenant General A.G. Montgomery Moore, who was commanding the British troops in Canada. Once he had obtained his Ministers approval in principle, the administrative arrangements had to be worked out. They proved to be awesomely complicated. The basic proposal was that the company at Fredericton would be exchanged for a company of the Royal Berkshire Regiment for six months. For the British, there were worries about the duty free wines to which they were entitled while Canadian officers were not. There were married men to be settled since there were few married quarters in Halifax and a high proportion of the Canadians had families. There was little complaint about transportation although an unsuccessful effort was made to obtain free passes on the Intercolonial Railway. Rations were a source of dispute since the British claimed that their issue of meat and bread plus 3d stoppage a day gave a fuller and more varied diet than the Canadian practice of eating everything. The Canadians maintained that theirs was better and certainly more expensive than the British issue. A final problem was discipline. It was agreed that the officers of each group would look after their own men but the commanding officer of the Canadians at Halifax would find out from the commanding officer of the Berkshires what he would have given as punishment before passing his own sentence.⁷⁹⁰ Despite all the difficulties, the exchange was administratively effective. The British Company at Fredericton took over the duties of the Canadians and even attended the annual camp at Sussex. The Canadians at Halifax acquired the compliments of the British officers

* The only apparent source of friction was the failure of the officer in command of the Canadian company to pay his mess bill. RG 9 II B 1 599, 69, Aylmer-Gordon, 18 September, 1897

and the arrangement was **continued** in 1898 with the exchange of a company of garrison artillery.⁷⁹¹

384. One of the problems which concerned Gascoigne was the lack of qualified officers. During 1896, he introduced provisional schools, conducted by a few instructors of the permanent corps, which could be attended by those seeking certificates without leaving their normal employment. It was obviously a less satisfactory manner of qualification than a period of full time training at one of the Schools, but it filled a serious gap. Early in April, Gascoigne had the chance to confer with Laurier and Borden about future policy in training the Militia. The new Government was anxious to guarantee annual drill for the whole Militia but this would require a reduction of the force. Gascoigne was ordered to work out how this might be done. He returned with a draft order which would eliminate 250 provisional officers. All those who had failed to qualify after holding provisional rank for three years would be removed. Some who would be affected had had ten years of opportunity. He anticipated that there would be an outcry but he trusted that the Prime Minister and the Minister would be prepared to face it. "Indeed if you are not so prepared," he warned them bluntly, "it would be idle for me to proceed farther in the way of retrenchment and of reducing inefficient Units, because this step is practically an indispensable preliminary in the direction of that policy upon which our present estimates have been based."⁷⁹²

385. Laurier and Borden accepted the challenge. On 1 May an order was issued cancelling all certificates issued prior to 1883 for all purposes of appointment or promotion.⁷⁹³ In July, the regulations governing age limits were amended to

reduce the age for lieutenant colonels from 63 to 60. Except "under very special circumstances", officers were to be placed on the Retired List on reaching their age limit for their rank. District Officers Commanding⁷⁹⁴ were ordered to submit lists of officers who could be retired under the regulation.⁷⁹⁴ A third regulation, with the most devastating effect of all was introduced in October. All appointments as commanding officer in the past had lasted as long as the officer was under the age limit, wished to remain and was not conspicuously inefficient. Now, the appointments were to be limited to five years with a possible extension of three more years on the recommendation of the District Officer Commanding.⁷⁹⁵ In his report for 1897, Gascoigne could look forward to the beneficial effects of regulations which would open up promotion in a great many battalions for the first time in decades.⁷⁹⁶ Two Nova Scotia battalions had had the same commanding officers since Confederation.⁷⁹⁶ Twenty-one commanding officers had held their appointments for over twenty years. It did not escape the eye of the Minister that a great many commanding officers, young and old, were Conservatives and that, in some cases, their aspiring replacements were Liberals. The age limit was also a means of relieving the Militia staff of several elderly officers whose earlier removal on the grounds of inefficiency had proven impossible. Colonels Houghton and Duchesnay were retired because of the age limit as were several other officers who had possibly been more valuable to the Militia. Lieutenant Colonels Henry Smith and Maunsell, however, were **retained** for a year.⁷⁹⁷

* In September, 1896, the designations "Deputy Adjutant-General" and "Brigade Major" were changed to District Officer Commanding and District Staff Officer. MGO 74, 9 September 1896.

** Lieutenant Colonels W.E. Starratt of the 69th Battalion and L. de V Chipman of the 68th Battalion.

386. To replace General Cameron at the Royal Military College, a young, active and imaginative British officer was obtained. Lieutenant Colonel G.R. Kitson of the King's Royal Rifle Corps took a year to decide what was needed at the College. He had been allowed to employ independent examiners to check on the academic standards of the College and it was they who set the examinations for the year. The results were devastating. In Civil Engineering, Professor Carr Harris had given his class an average of 70% at their Christmas examination. An outside examiner gave a class average of below 50% at the final examination. The comments of the examiners were devastating. The examiner in French reported that a graduate could make out approximately the meaning of an ordinary French passage. "He cannot write even a passable French letter. He cannot pretend to carry on a French conversation." In Descriptive Geometry, the examiner decided that the young men must be almost entirely self-taught. In mathematics, there was such a variety in ability that the examiner could only assume that the cadets were allowed to progress from year to year regardless of their ability. Colonel Kitson decided that this was probably true of most of the courses and that the enormous totals of marks which Cameron had been able to report in recent years as proof of his competence were due to this "mistaken kindness".^{797a} In June, 1897, almost the whole of the civil professional staff was dismissed with a few weeks notice. They were followed by three senior non commissioned officers of the subordinate staff, including the College's well known drill instructor and gymnastic instructor, Sergeant Major Morgans.⁷⁹⁸ An even more striking change was to reduce the College course from four to three years. The annual fees, which had been set at \$200, were cut in half and the old fine

of \$100 for cadets who withdrew before the completion of their course was abolished. The Headquarters Board of Examiners was also eliminated and the entrance examinations were henceforth to be conducted by the Commandant and his staff.⁷⁹⁹ The revitalized College was able to attract forty would be entrants for the fall of 1897, four times as many as in the previous year. Under Kitson, its reputation began to revive and the real threat of the Imperial Government's withdrawal of the four annual commissions disappeared.

387. These developments did not have the sympathy of the Conservative opposition and particularly of Sir Charles Tupper. The Conservative leader maintained that the new syllabus had completely altered the nature of the College and that it was now a competitor of civil universities. Such was not the purpose for which Alexander Mackenzie had established it and he threatened to work for its abolition.⁸⁰⁰ The debate on the estimates for the College were split on partisan lines but the Government had little difficulty showing, from the testimony of Gascoigne, the Board of Visitors and even from several statements of graduates of the College that it had reached a very unsatisfactory state under General Cameron.⁸⁰¹

388. For many members of the Militia, the most exciting event of 1897 was the attendance of a Canadian contingent of 200 men at the celebration of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee. Originally only 27 men were invited as a Canadian contingent, but the idea caught fire in a wave of popular enthusiasm in English-speaking Canada. On 13 April 1897, that ardent Imperialist, Colonel James Domville moved adjournment to raise the question of a Canadian contingent, and his enthusiasm was echoed by Colonel Hughes, Colonel E.G. Prior and Dr. Thomas Sproule, an ardent Orangeman. The

Government announced that it had already been engaged in correspondence with the British authorities and more than merely the Northwest Mounted Police would be represented.⁸⁰² Private enterprise was also active but the Government felt obliged to turn down offers of Militia battalions.⁸⁰³ The contingent's membership was inevitably the field for intense political jockeying. The men in the ranks were obtained by allotting a number of vacancies to units across the country but places for officers were arranged on a more personal basis.⁸⁰³ By the time the organization was settled, it included 16 officers and 141 other ranks, with 25 from the Northwest Mounted Police and 20 officers who were otherwise unattached. The latter group included half a dozen Members of Parliament and the Minister's son, Lieutenant Harold Borden.^{*} The whole were under the command of Colonel the Hon. Matthew Aylmer, the Adjutant-General.⁸⁰⁴

389. The bulk of the officers and men of the contingent had gathered at Quebec by 28 May 1897. They drilled three times a day, were fitted for their uniforms and were inspected by the General Officer Commanding, the Lieutenant Governor of Quebec and the Governor General. There were the usual compliments to the little band save from the correspondent of the Quebec Chronicle who was not impressed:

Either their corps must be most miserable ones as a whole, or favouritism would seem to have decided the choice, of the men, for it is hard to imagine many of them as anything like the best possible representatives of their regiments. A number of them are of poor physique, good few would stand quite a lot of brushing up and tidying. If to all this, poor marching and ill-fitting uniforms are added, the result can be imagined.⁸⁰⁵

* The Minister seems to have been an unusually fond father. His son became a Second Lieutenant in the Militia on 23 April 1897, less than a week before the contingent assembled at Quebec. At 20 years, he was its youngest officer.

The contingent sailed on 6 June on the R.M.S. Vancouver. It was not a comfortable voyage as the ship was overcrowded but daily parades and drills were arranged. On 16 June, they landed and went immediately to London, to be met by the Canadian High Commissioner, Lord Strathcona and by Colonel Ivor Herbert, a familiar face, who was in command of the colonial contingents for the Jubilee. The men were divided among the other colonial contingents according to their arm of service, a policy which aroused some ill feeling but which Aylmer chose to accept. The great parade was on 22 June, with the various colonial forces following their respective arm in the British Army. This great procession was followed by reviews at Hyde Park and Aldershot and the men at least were granted little respite. On 3 July, the contingent was presented its Jubilee medals by the Prince of Wales and by evening, it had reached Liverpool and embarked. The men had hoped for a week's holiday in England but this was not considered by the Government. On 11 July, their ship had reached Quebec and the contingent was promptly dispersed. There were the usual congratulatory telegrams and a dispatch from Joseph Chamberlain to Lord Aberdeen was published in Militia General Orders to help spread his conviction that the military gathering had done much "to knit closer the bonds of union between the Colonies and the Mother Country..."⁸⁰⁷ It was somewhat more to the point that the Contingent cost \$27,875, a sum which was more than repaid, according to the Minister of Trade and Commerce, by the sale of Jubilee stamps.⁸⁰⁸

390. In line with Laurier and Borden's undertaking that the whole of the Militia would be drilled, there were camps in June and September and the great majority of rural militia units, at least in Eastern Canada, had an oppor-

tunity to attend one or other of the sets of camps. The orders for the September camps included a new provision which caused considerable grumbling. Gascoigne tried to lay down physical standards for the men who could be brought to camp. While there had been age restrictions in the past and energetic staff officers had occasionally refused to count the boys or very old men whom commanding officers often drew in to complete their ranks, there had never been a full set of standards before. Non-commissioned officers and men would henceforth have to be between 18 and 45 (50 for senior non-commissioned officers) with a chest measurement of at least 33 inches, and a height of 5 ft. 4 in for mounted corps and 5 ft. 5 in. for dismounted. They were required to be free of lameness and flat feet and to have the use of all limbs and all senses.⁸⁰⁹ In the instructions for inspecting officers, they were ordered to dismount to inspect each company and to make a careful examination of arms and equipment. "Inspecting officers are reminded that a review and a march-past, or other ceremonial movements, do not constitute as inspection, nor are they even a necessary part of it."⁸¹⁰

391. In his report for the year, Gascoigne could reflect a certain optimism. The Lee-Enfields had been introduced for the first time and sufficient had been sent to each camp to allow two battalions at a time to drill with them. Six batteries of the new field guns had arrived and been issued and four more were on their way. This would leave nine batteries unprovided for. The Oliver equipment had finally been adopted and he hoped that by the end of the following year most of the Militia would have been re-equipped. There was one request which he would make - that Thanksgiving

be placed in the month of October for the convenience of Militia who wished to hold field days in the fall.⁸¹¹ The authorized strength of the permanent corps had been reduced to 750, a strength which available recruits could hardly maintain. In December, 1897, there were 703 men in the ranks although almost half of these had more than three service.⁸¹²

392. 1897 was the year of the third Colonial Conference. Once again the British Government took advantage of the presence of colonial premiers in London for a Jubilee. The second Colonial Conference had been held in Ottawa in 1894. Because it was only held in a colonial capital with a colonial minister, Sir Mackenzie Bowell, presiding, it hardly ranks as a Colonial Conference. It had also concerned itself almost exclusively with subjects, such as Imperial Preference and the laying of a cable between Canada and Australia, which were what the colonies rather than Britain really wished to discuss. The Conference of 1897 was to make up for that. In his opening address, the Colonial Secretary, Joseph Chamberlain, sought to make his position painfully clear to his audience of colonial premiers. They were to be taken to see the fleet at Spithead, only part of a force which cost the United Kingdom 35,000,000 each year. Every war in which Britain had been involved had a colonial issue at its base. He pointedly directed his examples at Canada:

Assume - although I am almost ashamed to assume it even for the purpose of argument, - assume that these Colonies were separated from the mother country. What would be the position of the great Dominion of Canada? The Dominion of Canada is bordered for 3000 miles by a most powerful neighbour, whose potentialities are infinitely greater than her actual resources. She comes into conflict in regard to the most important interests with the rising power of Japan and even in regard to some of her interests with the great empire of Russiaif Canada had not behind her to-day, and does not continue to have behind her this great military and naval power of Great Britain, she would have to make concessions to her neighbours, and to accept views which might be

extremely distasteful to her in order to remain permanently in good terms with them. She would not be able to, it would be impossible that she should, herself, control all the details of her own destiny; she would be, to a greater or less extent, in spite of the bravery of her population and the patriotism of her people, she would still be, to a great extent, a dependent country. 813

None of this persuaded Canada to make any undertakings in defence. The Australian squadron was approved by the Admiralty and the Australasian delegates and the Prime Minister of the Cape Colony gained momentary acclaim by announcing his colony's contribution of a battleship. In the realm of military defence, no resolutions were passed although the possibilities of exchanges of permanent units were discussed and Laurier and Borden, who was also present, agreed with other delegates that they would look into the legal implications of exchanges when they went home. 814

GASCOIGNE GOES HOME

393. General Gascoigne had not found his Canadian appointment particularly comfortable or congenial. As has been seen, he had considered resignation under the Conservatives. The Liberals were an improvement insofar as they appeared more stable but motives of a political nature continued to play a distressingly prominent part in the formulation of policy. Within the Department itself, many of the senior officials were becoming very elderly and slow. The Deputy Minister, Lieutenant Colonel Panet and the Director of Stores, Lieutenant Colonel John Macpherson, were both in their late sixties and old for their years. Lieutenant Colonel Bacon, the chief clerk of the Quartermaster General's Branch, was even older. The effect of their long service with the Department was to make any change from ordinary routine much more difficult to achieve and Gascoigne was not of a character to find such an effort congenial. It had been and remained

difficult to co-ordinate the work of the civil and military branches. Questions of the relative authority of the Deputy Minister and the General Officer Commanding were perennially arising. In May 1897, Gascoigne even took his complaints to the Prime Minister. An estimate for repairs to the Levis rifle range had been seen by the General. In his opinion, the figure quoted was "of so astounding a size" as to raise a doubts and he felt that much of the work was unnecessary. He had suggested that Colonel Irwin and an officer from the Architect's Branch should go down to examine the situation on the spot. There was no reply and a month later, Gascoigne learned that a Mr. Mathieu of the Architect's Branch had gone down alone and considerably reduced the estimate. The General was furious that he had been ignored in a subject in which he felt that there was a military concern. Without his technical approval, military officers would not be willing to take the responsibility of using the range. Laurier was pressed to settle the dispute in the absence of the Minister.⁸¹⁵

394. Another problem which bothered the General was interference in internal administration and discipline, Officers of both the Active Militia and the permanent corps continued to write to Members of Parliament and even to the Minister to obtain permission or support for personal concerns. One example was Lieutenant F.H.C. Sutton of the Royal Canadian Dragoons. He had been appointed to a vacancy in the permanent corps in 1895 under the Conservatives and, at the time, questions had been asked by the Liberals since Sutton was not a graduate of the Royal Military College and there was a strong suspicion that he had not been recommended by General Herbert.⁸¹⁶ Nonetheless, Sutton seems to have survived the change of Government more successfully than others. In late 1896, when he was granted lodging allowance, he was

informed that, according to regulations, he would forfeit his light and fuel allowance. Then Borden was persuaded to order that he would receive both allowances, a decision which Gascoigne was moved to protest to the Prime Minister. ⁸¹⁷

When officers went to England on course in the summer of 1897, Sutton was included on the insistence of the Prime Minister himself. Gascoigne protested that the young man had passed none of the required prerequisite courses and that he had also acquired a "reputation" but Laurier was adamant. "The Premier replied that all my arguments were good, but that as he had given a promise, it must be kept, and that Lt. Sutton must go. He accordingly was sent." ⁸¹⁸

Gascoigne was vindicated when Sutton displaying "either a lamentable want of ability or a culpable lack of attention". Nonetheless, a place had been taken which a more suitable officer could have filled.

395. One of the most persistent problems for Gascoigne was that the troubles in the Queen's Own Rifles and the 5th Royal Scots had not ceased. In the case of Colonel Hamilton, the new Minister seems to have accepted the wisdom of the recommendation made by Gascoigne to the previous government but he also refused to put it into effect by forcing Hamilton out. As a result, the battalion continued to have two commanding officers, Colonel Hamilton and Major Delamere, the second in command. The situation in the Royal Scots was even more annoying because of the much greater prominence it continued to receive in the press. Gascoigne's attempt to restore peace in the winter of 1896 had not had a permanent effect. In April, a meeting of the officers again broke up in a storm. Colonel Strathy sent Major Ibbotson a letter threatening to place him under arrest if a sum of money due from his company was not handed over promptly.

Ibbotson sent in another resignation and demanded a Court of Inquiry. Strathy refused both the court and the resignation.⁸¹⁹ In July, 1896, Colonel Lake asked Strathy for a group picture of his officers in full dress to send to an English illustrated paper. Strathy agreed but when he tried to gather his officers, he discovered that several of them bluntly refused. Major Blaiklock replied that he had not "the time, money or inclination".⁸²⁰ In October, a church parade was held for the battalion but Major Ibbotson and several of his supporters failed to turn out and their absence was very evident. Since the parade had been advertised in three newspapers and mentioned editorially, Strathy chose to regard his officers as absent without leave. After waiting for an explanation for over a month, Strathy sent Ibbotson a registered letter, demanding to know why he had not appeared. Ibbotson resigned again and this time Strathy accepted. Several other officers followed suit and the regiment was in danger of breaking up.⁸²¹

396. From the first, Gascoigne's view was that as much of the fault lay with Strathy as with his officers. He felt that the Colonel was a tactless and inconsiderate man and that the officers had a just grievance. In the summer of 1896, when Colonel Houghton sent him a copy of a special training syllabus Strathy had prepared for his unit, Gascoigne had a chance to make his feelings quite clear. Houghton, as Deputy Adjutant-General must make sure that it would be wise to introduce new rules which were not known in other battalions. He would be the first to encourage such changes if there was a good spirit in the units and the tact of the commanding officer could be relied upon. "...I do not wish to be myself made the stalking horse for any errors of tact and judgement of which Col. Strathy may be guilty in the future." The first

necessity would be to restore harmony and good feelings among the officers and men and introducing startling new changes did not seem to Gascoigne to be the best way to go about it.⁸²²

397. When the troubles in the 5th Royal Scots had not settled themselves a full year after he had first tried to settle them, Gascoigne recommended drastic action. In an English volunteer regiment, the Commanding officer, his second in command and any other officers who were making trouble would have been summarily removed and a new officer brought in to take the command. Borden was utterly unwilling to take such a violent step and instead ordered that a Court of Enquiry should be held.⁸²³ In order to keep the cost to a minimum, he refused to bring in an officer from outside Montreal but assigned the duty to the two District Officers Commanding on the spot, Lieutenant Colonels Houghton and Roy. To Gascoigne, this seemed worse than useless, particularly since he had no trust in the competence of the former officer, but he was obliged to accede. The Court opened on the evening of 20 April 1897 and dragged through twenty five sittings, all of them in the evening so that witnesses could attend. The affair was all that Gascoigne might have feared that it would be. Only Strathy and Ibbotson were allowed to be present and other officers invoked their legal rights in an attempt to be admitted to the hearings. Ibbotson claimed that Strathy dominated the proceedings, shouting out protests and threatening witnesses with immediate arrest. Houghton later denied that affairs were conducted in this manner although he admitted that Strathy, under great provocation, had uttered "private ejaculations" for which he had been called to order by the Court. For all the secrecy, the facts about the case filtered steadily into the Montreal newspapers and for this, Houghton evidently blamed Major Ibbotson and his friends.⁸²⁴