

the Minister made a tentative proposal to Laurier that Canada might offer help. The General, he explained, had worked out a scheme which called for 1200 men and 300 horses and which would cost \$300,000. If Canada had to pay for the transportation to and from South Africa, it would cost as much again.¹⁰⁹⁴ On 5 September 1899, Borden and Hutton had another long conversation in which the General laid great stress on the urgency of authorizing the contingent. It would take at least three months before a contingent could be formed and reach South Africa and if they did not hurry, the campaign would be over.¹⁰⁹⁵

521. At this interview, Hutton also revealed to Borden his own desire to go to South Africa as head of the colonial contingents. He had already broached the matter to the Governor General, explaining that the campaign would be over in four to six months, too short a time to disrupt his work in Canada, while the prestige he would gain if successful would be of great assistance to him on his return.¹⁰⁹⁶ He also wrote to senior British officers. To Sir Evelyn Wood, he wrote asking for the command of the colonial contingents, announcing flatly that the Canadian contribution would be a squadron of mounted rifles, a battery of artillery and two small battalions of infantry.¹⁰⁹⁷ Anticipating objections in Canada to his departure, he explained that he would be able to give the Canadian troops a better chance while the difficulties of all the colonial troops would be so great that it was necessary that someone who understood them should command them.

522. When Hutton returned from Nova Scotia on 23 September 1899, the issue of a South African contingent had assumed major importance. Throughout the month, the likelihood of war had grown steadily greater. Within Canada, there was a growing division of feeling about the South African War. While those who supported Britain were probably more numerous

and certainly far more vocal, there was a growing feeling of identification with the Boers from French Canada while many Irish Catholics had little appreciation of the grandeur of the British imperial mission. These groups were represented in the cabinet by Israel Tarte, the Minister of Public Works and by Richard Scott, the Secretary of State. Laurier, as Prime Minister, found himself between the two camps. As a French Canadian, he could sense the strength of French Canadian feeling against imperial adventures. As premier, he was not completely immune from the imperial mystique and he was also well aware of the strength and even the violence of feeling in English Canada. In the circumstances, he could wish that the initiative would come from the British Government. It was this feeling which, six months before, had persuaded him to accept the doctrine that the Imperial government could order the Canadian Militia where it pleased in event of war. While he might have fought such an order if it were given, the principle was that the order came from London, not from Ottawa. He and his government would not be held responsible. He would even obey a British request for troops. What he could not do politically is what Chamberlain, Minto, Hutton, the Opposition and the Toronto imperialists were all demanding. He could not make a spontaneous offer of Canadian soldiers to fight the Boers without running a grave risk of splitting his cabinet, his party and his country. It would have solved Laurier's problem if, by some means, a proposal like Hughes' Imperial Service Brigade could have been resurrected as a channel for patriotic fervor. Such a force was just what Chamberlain did not want. The Colonial Secretary had set his heart on independent, spontaneous and, above all, official commitment by the self-governing colonies. His agents in Canada, Lord Minto and General Hutton, had a clear understanding of his purpose.

523. The General spent only three days in Ottawa before he set out on his tour of inspection in the West. It may have seemed strange that he would leave Headquarters at a time of such urgency but he had a purpose. He did not want to be too closely identified with the agitation which was developing in the country for a Canadian participation in the forthcoming campaign. If a contingent was ordered, the plans were ready and he was confident that Colonel Foster would be able to look after any arrangements until he had returned.¹⁰⁹⁸ He had no doubt, in fact, that if a war broke out, the Canadian Government would have no alternative but to send troops. On 25 September 1899, calling on Richard Scott, the Secretary of State, he was asked whether he thought a few men could be got together for South Africa. Hutton replied, by his own account, "Not a few but 5,000 men without any difficulty." Scott retorted that Hutton did not know the real feeling of the country. Hutton grandly replied that he had told Borden and others that public opinion would force the Government to send troops.¹⁰⁹⁹ The little exchange did not add to Hutton's friends in the cabinet.

524. Hutton's first stop on his western tour was Winnipeg, where he stayed with the Lieutenant Governor, the same J.C. Patterson who had had such difficulties with General Herbert. Although Patterson was very cordial, opinion in Winnipeg was hostile to Hutton as the man who threatened to remove the squadron of Royal Canadian Dragoons. On the day of his arrival, the Winnipeg Tribune protested a move which would leave the city defenceless against Indians and Americans¹¹⁰⁰ and the following day, the Free Press was even more scornful of the proposal.¹¹⁰¹ Hutton sought to allay local feeling by calling a public meeting at Fort Osborne Barracks at which he answered questions about his policy. He also tackled the problem of Major Doidge whose 13th Field

Battery was in a very bad state. In the view of the District Officer Commanding, Doidge had been embezzling the funds of his battery and was guilty of other malpractices.¹¹⁰² Hutton ordered him to be suspended and summoned a court of inquiry, ordering Lieutenant Colonel Drury to come from Kingston to preside.¹¹⁰³ Hutton found that the condition of the battery was a matter of public discussion in Winnipeg.¹¹⁰⁴ Doidge was a powerful local Liberal and it did not take long before angry telegrams were on their way to Ottawa. Borden promptly ordered Hutton to countermand his order for an inquiry. Hutton refused, maintaining that it was a matter of discipline, and complaining about the tone of Borden's telegram.¹¹⁰⁵ The inquiry continued save that Drury was replaced as President by Captain V.A.S. Williams, the acting District Officer Commanding.¹¹⁰⁶

525. The remainder of his journey across the west was rather more cheerful. One of Hutton's purposes was to arouse enthusiasm for the new squadrons of mounted rifles which he intended to establish in centres across the prairies. For some reason, the Militia had never managed to get started in the Northwest but Hutton now found that he was met with great enthusiasm. At Virden, he inspected a troop of the Manitoba Dragoons. At Moose Jaw, he stopped long enough to receive a delegation. At Medicine Hat, where he spent a day, he addressed the citizens in a hall and then was given a banquet.¹¹⁰⁷ Reaching Calgary on 7 October 1899, he received the most enthusiastic reception of his journey. Raising horses was an important local industry and Hutton was able to talk in glowing terms of the possibility of an Imperial Remount Depot being established there. He confided to Minto, however, that many of the local horses were "simply discreditable...ill shaped, ewe-necked, badly broken stock."¹¹⁰⁸

526. Hutton was at Calgary when President Kruger issued his ultimatum of 9 October 1899. It was a tactical disaster for the South African republics. Until the ultimatum, many in Britain and in Canada had had misgivings about the aggressive policy being followed by Chamberlain and his supporters. There was an element of bullying in such behaviour which was distasteful to many moderate and thoughtful people. The ultimatum was an unexpected and undeserved gift to the extreme Imperialists. When it expired on 11 October 1899, many otherwise neutral folk had allowed themselves to be swept into the war hysteria.¹¹⁰⁹

527. The pressure for a contingent was mounting in Eastern Canada. When Mayor Sears of Saint John dared to say early in September that he thought that a force might be a little premature, he was repudiated unanimously by the city council which demanded that one be sent immediately.¹¹¹⁰ On 3 October 1899, the London correspondent of the Montreal Star cabled that the British Government was sending an acceptance of a Canadian contingent when no offer had actually been made. "The British government does not desire any large number, such as a thousand," he explained, "but only enough to add a fighting unit from each colony to the present united empire front in the field."¹¹¹¹ The following day, the Star bitterly denounced the failure of the Government to act.¹¹¹² The noise was not all on one side. In issue of the Canadian Military Gazette for 3 October 1899 appeared with what seemed to be an inspired article from Militia Headquarters, describing the proposed Canadian contingent. Promptly Israel Tarte denounced General Hutton as the source of the article and of the rest of the pressure on the Government. On 7 October 1899, Borden was passing through Windsor Station at Montreal when he was intercepted by a report^{er} from La Presse. Asked about Tarte's accusations, all he could say was that

it was not certain that Hutton had made the remarks attributed to him. "All that I can add is that I hope sincerely that he did not make them."¹¹¹³

528. On 9 October, at his Ministers' request, Minto wired Hutton to inform him that the cabinet was very annoyed at press reports of an offer of troops made by Canada and the consequent reply from the Imperial Government. The Canadian Government wanted assurances that no such offer had come from Hutton. In view of Chamberlain's policy, it must have seemed absurd to Hutton that he could be accused of such a thing and he replied that he had never authorized any communication to the press suggesting that the Canadian Government contemplated sending troops and he had been most careful to instruct his staff officers to avoid communications with the press.¹¹¹⁴ Three days later, he wired in code to Minto that he had had a letter from Chamberlain which stated that he would remain in Canada during the war and that the probable force from Canada would be a lieutenant colonel's command. The accusations in La Patrie^{*} that he had been communicating with the Canadian Military Gazette were pure fabrication.¹¹¹⁵ These denials did not relieve the Government of its suspicions for the article in the Gazette had not merely been authoritative, it had been very widely distributed. It was in the interests of both supporters and opponents of the Canadian contribution to suggest a difference between the Laurier cabinet and its Imperial military advisers.

529. The suspicions which the Military Gazette article had opened had been developed by the reply from Chamberlain to the non-existent offer of a contingent. This was, in fact,

* Tarte's Paper

a circular which was sent to all colonies on 3 October 1899, containing the notorious advice that cavalry would be the least serviceable and infantry the most serviceable troops which could be offered, and directing that the colonial contributions should be in small units of 125 men, armed with .303 rifles and fully equipped, with not more than four officers per unit. The whole contingent must not be commanded by an officer of higher rank than major. The colonial government was to pay the full cost until the contingent was landed in South Africa. Thereafter, the British Government would provide pay, allowances, pensions, supplies and ammunition on the same scale as for its own troops.¹¹¹⁶ This telegram was a source of embarrassment to the Canadian Government and Hutton, unwittingly and undeservedly, was to bear a large share of the inevitable recrimination in the cabinet. Chamberlain left the Canadian ministers little choice. They could either accept the "reply" as an ultimatum or they could take the enormous political risk of rejecting it. If they accepted it, there were many objectionable features. Chamberlain's organization was designed to obtain a collection of representative detachments which would be of almost exclusively symbolic value. There were to be no senior colonial officers to get in the way of British military authority. There were to be no major colonial units to complicate the British order of battle. Infantry was preferred for many reasons but chiefly because the colonials were known to be untrained and infantry, it seemed, could most easily be made useful. In neither case did Chamberlain's proposal bear any relation to the force which Hutton had planned in July or to the reduced force - an infantry battalion - which he had worked out with Foster at the end of September. Hutton, himself, felt that the Colonial Office had made a serious mistake in its proposal.¹¹¹⁷

530. For ten days after receiving Chamberlain's telegram, no action was taken. Pressure mounted. On 11 October 1899, the Montreal Star, rapidly gaining experience in the art of war propaganda, announced "The Coon Comes Down", reporting that "Com. Laurier" and his Liberals were finally moving. It was sandwiched between headlines which reported "barbaric excesses committed by Boers on British women and children" and another declaring "Grit Papers Sneer".¹¹¹⁸

531. For two days, 12 and 13 October 1899, the Cabinet debated its course of action. The resulting order in council reflected the degree of compromise which was necessary. 1,000 men were to be equipped out of the stores then in the possession of the Militia Department and were to be shipped to South Africa at public expense. The justification was the desire of so many Canadians to serve there and the expenditure was not to be considered as a precedent.¹¹¹⁹ On the following day, a Militia Order was issued according to the plan which had been made beforehand, calling for 1,000 men between 22 and 40 years of age and at least 5'6" tall to serve an enlistment of six months. The various district headquarters were the recruiting centres but volunteers could also apply to Militia commanding officers.¹¹²⁰ With this order, the raising of the force began.

532. Once the Government's policy had been announced, much of the atmosphere of contention passed away. The imperialists now had a chance to urge others to volunteer and the opponents could content themselves with the small scale of what had been done. Tarte, having succeeded in including the "no precedent" clause in the order in council, remained in the cabinet.¹¹²¹ Only Henri Bourassa, a brilliant young Liberal, chose to register his protest by resigning his seat in the House of Commons.

ORGANIZING THE CONTINGENT

533. Chamberlain had demanded that the contingents sail by 31 October. There were only eighteen days from 13 October 1899 to accomplish the task of raising, equipping, organizing, assembling and shipping 1,000 men. On Monday, 16 October 1899, the arrangements were announced in detail. There were to be eight companies and 120 men were to be enlisted for each. Only the very best men were to be accepted and these would not necessarily be the first comers. Where possible, companies were to be based for administration on existing units of the permanent force and, where possible, permanent force medical officers were to be responsible for the physical examination of the recruits. On the following day, non-commissioned officers and men of the Royal Canadian Regiment of Infantry and the garrison division of the Royal Canadian Regiment of Infantry and the garrison division of the Royal Canadian Artillery were allowed to transfer subject to approval from Headquarters. On Wednesday, company commanders were ordered to submit size rolls of their men and practical advice was given to ensure that the clothing would fit. On Friday, the eight companies were allotted letters and locations. "A" Company came from the West, "B", "C" and "D" from Ontario, "E" and "F" from Quebec and "G" and "H" from the Maritimes. On the following day, the company officers were announced. Six of the thirty two officers were from the permanent force. "F" Company had French-speaking officers.¹¹²²

534. The major difficulty in preparing the contingent in an amazingly short period was the problem of selecting the officers. This should not have been the case for Hutton and Foster had been careful to include lists of suitable officers for the various organizations they had planned during

July and September. The difficulty was not with the company officers nor with the commander of the force. Once it was evident that Hutton would not be allowed to lead the Canadians to South Africa, the General's choice had fallen on Lieutenant Colonel W.D. Otter, the District Officer Commanding of M.D.2 and commanding officer of the Royal Canadian Regiment of Infantry. While Otter, at 56, was rather old for such a command and although he had seen no active service outside Canada, he was the senior lieutenant colonel in the permanent force, he was the only Canadian officer ever to have held an independent command in the field and he remained an active, energetic and forceful officer. Of the infantry lieutenant colonels in the Canadian Militia, he was the obvious choice. The real problem was to find him suitable field officers. In the original organization, Hutton had envisaged a tiny brigade, with two battalions of 500 men each. One was to be commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Buchan and the other by Lieutenant Colonel Sam Hughes. Lieutenant Colonel Lawrence Buchan, like Otter, had begun his military career in the Queen's Own Rifles of Toronto. He had been in Winnipeg at the time of the Northwest Rebellion and had gained distinction with the 90th Rifles at Batoche. Immediately afterwards, he had been accepted as a second in command of the Mounted Infantry School at Winnipeg at the time of its formation. Hutton knew him as the commandant of the Royal School of Infantry at London, Ontario, and he was impressed by him. Buchan, too, at 52, was not young but he seemed solid and reliable.

535. It is more difficult to explain the appointment of Colonel Hughes. He was younger than the other two, 47, and he had only been promoted to lieutenant colonel in the Militia in 1897. He had seen no active service, not even in 1885. He was an enthusiastic militiaman as he was enthusiastic about

everything else he undertook. Hughes' chief avocation was as a politician. If there was one strong reason for his appointment, it was that he was the noisiest and most energetic proponent of Canadian military assistance to the United Kingdom. With his brilliant talent for self-advertisement, he had identified himself with that cause in the public mind. Since Hutton never imagined that the Canadians would ever ^{have} to do any fighting in South Africa, it may have seemed judicious to balance the administrative talents of Otter and Buchan with the flamboyant ^{ce of} Hughes. Hughes, himself, had an insatiable thirst for military glory and, as in everything else he wanted, he could not endure frustration. To oppose Hughes at any time was to earn an abiding and formidable hatred. He would stop at nothing to gain revenge on those who slighted him. This would have mattered little if Hughes had not also had the power to dominate and even to terrify his political colleagues. In a period of war hysteria, he was even more formidable for he was believed to embody the emotions and ideas of the mass electorate.

536. It was thus a decision of major importance when Hutton reconsidered Hughes appointment and determined to appoint someone else. His reason was that Hughes' insubordination had finally passed reasonable bounds. The two men had first clashed the previous April when Hutton had tried to prevent Hughes from bringing forward his motion for the Imperial Service Brigade. After a stormy interview at Militia Headquarters, Hughes had paid no further attention to Hutton's request. Later, he suggested that the General should be punished for having tried to restrict a Member of Parliament's freedom of speech and also for having proposed that the election of a Militia officer to Parliament should cause him to resign his commission.¹¹²³ In June, at the camp

at Niagara, there had been another dispute when Hughes encamped his battalion on ground which Hutton had intended for another unit. When he threatened to take his men home if they were moved, he was allowed to stay. The real difference came over the sending of a contingent to South Africa. Both men were anxious for Canadians to serve there but Hutton was determined that it would be an official force while Hughes only wanted a force, official or unofficial, which he would be allowed to command. As the crisis developed, he received many telegrams from men who were anxious to serve in South Africa and who knew of his reputation as the leading Canadian military imperialist. Finally, at the end of July, furious at the slowness of the Government, he drafted an offer of Canadian troops under his command which he sent to the Minister of Militia, to the Governor General and to the Secretary of State for the Colonies. From Borden, he received a polite but non-committal reply. For the Liberal Government, the Hughes offer remained the most hopeful way of avoiding actual involvement. From Joseph Chamberlain, he received a even politer refusal.¹¹²⁴ From Hutton, who had received a copy of Hughes' letter to the Governor General, he received a curt demand for an explanation of his "irregular" conduct in writing to Canadian and British ministers without going through the proper military channels.¹¹²⁵ If Hutton hoped to crush Hughes with such an approach, he was sadly mistaken.

537. Hughes' reaction to the rebuke implied in being asked to explain his actions was immediate indignation. He denied that he had acted in a military capacity in sending the letters. He had written as a civilian and as a member of Parliament, and if he had signed himself as "Lieutenant Colonel, commanding the 45th Victoria Battalion," that was merely by way of description. Moreover, since the enquiry

from Hutton had come "by command of the Governor General", he demanded to know by what authority the General Officer Commanding could receive orders direct from the Governor General, particularly when those orders were so improper as to be requests for Sam Hughes to explain himself.¹¹²⁶ Having made this reply, he soon after published in his newspaper an invitation to all those who would wish to come with him on active service in South Africa to send him their names. This action caused press reaction and the observation in some newspapers that Hughes was usurping the functions of Government. Hughes regarded these remarks as slanderous and, through his contacts with news reporters, he believed that he had traced their source to General Hutton. Still later, there was a report that Hutton had informed Hughes that he was liable to a fine of \$100.00 or to imprisonment under the Army Act for attempting to recruit for the British Army. Once again, there was a Hughes counter-attack, this time in the press, with an interview at Lindsay in which delighted reporters were told that Hughes would not permit "any man, press agent or officer to slander me publicly by publishing untruths concerning me." He was sure, however, that such "absurd assertions" could not have come from the General who would surely know better.¹¹²⁸

538. The duty of replying to Hughes' letters, in the absence of Hutton, fell to Colonel Foster. He pointed out to Hughes that he had in fact acted in a military capacity by the offer of his services and of his battalion and that it was not possible for him to disassociate himself from his military position by claiming that he had acted purely as a civilian. He also insisted that no officer had a right to disobey orders and Hughes had been ordered to withdraw his letter and to apologize.¹¹²⁹ Having had no satisfactory reply,

Foster sent a second letter to the District Officer Commanding of M.D. 3&4, directing that unless Hughes' letter was withdrawn, he would be suspended from the command of his battalion.¹¹³⁰ Meanwhile, he had received an "insubordinate and threatening" letter from Hughes on the 10th.¹¹³¹

539. When Hutton had first been made aware of Hughes' determination to lead a regiment to South Africa, in a letter from Minto on 11 August 1899, he had not been too seriously annoyed. It was a "piece of pure presumption" but Hughes remained a good officer under supervision. To give him the command, of course, would only ensure that the Canadians were left at the base or on the lines of communication.¹¹³² On 24 August 1899, he sent another letter from Hughes to the Governor General "as a specimen of what a self-sufficient Colonial Officer can put on paper."¹¹³³ It was the development of the correspondence and Hughes' obdurate contumacy that convinced him that such an officer could no longer be trusted with such a position. It was Hughes' state of defiance rather than any mental unbalance which disqualified him. On 14 October 1899, the day the Contingent was announced, he wired the Governor General to say that Hughes "want of judgement and insubordinate self-assertion...would seriously compromise success of Canada when co-operating with Imperial troops." If infantry were sent, he wanted Otter to command and Buchan and Lieutenant Colonel Oscar Pelletier¹¹³⁴ to serve as field officers. Hughes was not slow to press his claims. Already, on 3 October 1899, he had written to Otter pressing for a place on any contingent. "In official military matters, no one is more ready than I to blindly obey and have no opinion of my own."¹¹³⁵ He also put heavy pressure on the Government. Although Hughes was a Conservative, Borden and his colleagues were not anxious to accuire the further

hostility of the vindictive Orangeman and they joined in pressing for at least some appointment. Even Lord Minto advised Hutton to offer him a company. "Otter agrees - Minister of Militia and Premier wish it, I think it would be advisable to meet their views in this case."¹¹³⁶ Hutton stood firm. His presence with the force would be "an endless source of embarrassment to his superiors and will seriously compromise success of Canadians co-operating with Imperial troops."¹¹³⁷ Again Minto pressed for some appointment, explaining to the stubborn Hutton that the Canadian public would regard Hughes as badly used and there was strong feeling that he should not be left out. The cabinet might well insist on his appointment. Hughes, himself, had seemed more sensible recently. "I have the strongest reasons for hoping that withdrawal of opposition should be on your initiative."¹¹³⁸ Hutton still refused to change his mind. If the Cabinet insisted for reasons of political expediency, he would be forced to obey.¹¹³⁹ By this time, Hutton was on his way back to Ottawa and the Governor General asked him to see him immediately on his arrival. On his way, Hutton saw from the Winnipeg papers that Hughes and Lieutenant Colonel W.D. Gordon were rumoured to be the two majors of the battalion. From the station, Hutton cabled Foster in some desperation that it would be a disaster to send either of them. Hughes he had already reported upon and Gordon was "inefficient, devoid of initiative and short-sighted."¹¹⁴⁰

540. When Hutton reached Ottawa on the evening of 25 October 1899, the storm over Hutton had reached its height. On 23 October 1899, Hughes had submitted a 5,000 word statement of his grievances against Hutton to the cabinet. It was a characteristic document, mixing complaint, accusation and innuendo. There were eight offences, ranging from an

outburst of temper to ignorance of constitutional law which Hughes kindly agreed not to consider. Instead, he listed the personal insults which he felt that he had received from the General and claiming at the end that he had been displaced from the contingent by the combined machinations of Hutton and unnamed British authorities. Hughes opened his charges with the dramatic statement that "it would be tantamount to treason to remain silent longer" but his real motives were clearer in his conclusion: "...honour demands that in addition to bearing irritation, provocation, oppression and slander, I shall not endure the even more infamous offence of public humiliation and unmerited disgrace without letting right, justice and truth have a chance to prevail."¹¹⁴¹ It was on the basis of this lengthy document that Hutton was called before the cabinet on the morning of 26 October 1899, Richard Scott presided in the absence of Laurier. He was no friend of Hutton and his background gave him no reason to sympathize with Imperial officers and their ways. Before Hutton had said anything, Scott demanded to know whether he thought that he governed the country and accused him of being a martinet and of driving Hughes to his insubordination. Hutton's remarks about the fate of the Australian government which had opposed him were recalled and he was asked if he thought the same thing would happen in Canada. The other ministers seem to have been a little surprised at their colleague's violence. They accepted Hutton's explanations and, after two more meetings, Hutton's choices of field officers were endorsed.¹¹⁴² On the evening of 27 October 1899, the list of officers was published in Militia Orders. In addition to the Canadian officers, it indicated that Captain Bell, the General's aide de camp and Major Lawrence Drummond, the Governor General's Military Secretary, would be accompanying the force. For the first time, too, the official title of the contingent was

given as the 2nd (Special Service) Battalion, Royal Canadian Regiment of Infantry.^{1143*} Minto had won approval from the British for the regimental organization and, in the event that the eight companies would be split in South Africa, two extra officers were authorized as battalion adjutants.¹¹⁴⁴¹¹⁴⁵

541. The question of Hughes was not yet dead. On the night of 27 October 1899, Hutton and Borden went down to Quebec by train. The press campaign on behalf of Hughes had continued and Hughes, himself, finally realizing that he might after all be left behind, had made a half-hearted apology to Hutton. During the journey, Borden managed to persuade Hutton to allow Hughes to accompany the contingent but only on condition that he had no military capacity and that he did not wear uniform. Hutton also declared that he would not recommend Hughes for any employment once he reached South Africa.¹¹⁴⁶

542. The arrangements at Quebec were the culmination of three weeks of frantic rush. Much of the material, including the khaki clothing had to be manufactured. There was Oliver equipment enough for the force only if it was withdrawn for the permanent force. The Allan Line cattle boat Sardinian had been chartered for the voyage and it had to be considerably altered to provide space for officers, nurses, other ranks, horses, equipment, ammunition and even a guard room and prison. Much had to be improvised. To determine the storage space for the men's valises, it was necessary to make a package of the regulation contents and measure it for the actual valises had not arrived.¹¹⁴⁷ The men themselves began arriving on Wednesday, 25 October and the last to reach Quebec was the half company from Vancouver

* The uniform, however, was that of a rifle regiment Militia Orders, 217 (5) 23 October 1899

which arrived early on 29 October 1899.¹¹⁴⁸ In some cases, companies had recruited over strength but "F" Company, being raised at Quebec, did not reach its allotted strength and the height requirement was lowered to allow it to bring in a sufficient representation of French Canadians.¹¹⁴⁹

543. The men of the contingent were billeted in the Citadel where, it was alleged, they were left to the mercy of the permanent force garrison. The officers were better treated. On the evening of 28 October, there was a banquet in their honour at the Garrison Club. Both Borden and Hutton made speeches. In the basically Conservative surroundings of the Garrison Club, it happened that Hutton received rather greater applause. This annoyed Borden who remained in the club after dinner. At 3.00 a.m., there was a noisy quarrel between the Minister and an ex-officer of the Militia after which, according to Hutton, Borden was carried helpless to bed.¹¹⁵⁰ On the following day, a Sunday, there was a Church Parade, conducted by Canon F.G. Scott, who compared the British to the ancient Hebrews in their struggle to destroy the effete Canaanite civilization. In the evening, there was another dinner for the officers, this time given by the Governor General. Once again, there was oratory, from Lord Minto, Sir Wilfred Laurier, Dr. Borden and General Hutton. They were, according to the Montreal Star, four remarkable speeches. The Governor General had told the officers that this was no time for quibbles about Canada's responsibility while Hutton added that "Canada lives, moves and has her being in maintaining the British Empire."¹¹⁵¹ Hutton also gathered the officers for his own private briefing, advising them that there would be no fighting in South Africa but there was certain to be hard campaigning. He advised them to divide the men into groups of four for cooking and bivouacking and,

for themselves, not to save money on good cooks. Finally, he urged the regiment to stick together. This sound advice was published to the world by an enterprising reporter who had hidden behind a curtain.¹¹⁵²

544. At 11.30 on the following day, Monday, 30 October 1899, the battalion was paraded on the Esplanade for a further allotment of speeches from Minto, Laurier, Hutton and the Mayor of Quebec. There was then a march through the streets, amidst great popular enthusiasm, to the dock where the men were embarked in excellent order. Borden, who had missed the review in the morning, appeared as the troops had marched away. There had been considerable talk that the Government would make up the difference between Canadian and British pay for the officers and men while they were in South Africa. Some of the officers had been pressing Hutton on this point and he took advantage of the Minister's arrival to get him to give the officers some assurance about their pay. He failed to notice that the Minister had not fully recovered his health and was therefore ill-prepared to be told to mind his own business. The rebuke was administered publicly and before his officers and Hutton was to remember it as one of his grievances against the Minister.¹¹⁵³

545. The passage to South Africa took exactly a month and, on the morning of 30 November 1899, the contingent disembarked at Capetown. The voyage had been without incident save for the death of one man. The ship itself proved to be small and more than usually unstable at sea. The accommodation, particularly for the men in the holds, was particularly unpleasant. Colonel Otter developed his reputation as a somewhat unimaginative disciplinarian by insisting on punctilious saluting and as much drill as time

and the ship's limited deck area would allow. Another idea of his, to harden the men to heat by requiring them to go barefoot on the deck, had to be abandoned after a large number of men reported sick. The presence of Colonel Hughes proved to be as difficult and disruptive as he had confidentially anticipated.¹¹⁵⁴ When the Sardinian passed the three mile limit, Hughes emerged on deck fully dressed in the uniform Hutton had forbidden him to wear and announced that the only authority on the ship whom he would respect would be the captain of the ship.¹¹⁵⁵

FURTHER CONTINGENTS FOR SOUTH AFRICA

546. The Canadians had hardly arrived in South Africa before they heard of the three disastrous battles of "Black Week", 10 - 16 December 1899. The defeats at Stormberg, Magersfontein and Colenso shattered three myths of the British Army - that British soldiers never surrender, that Highlanders never run away and that guns are never captured. Imperialists in Canada might delight in Queen Victoria's widely quoted statement: "There is no depression in this house. We are not interested in the possibilities of defeat. They do not exist." At the same time, they could never look on Britain, and certainly not on British military prowess in the same light as before.

547. On 7 November 1899, the Canadian Government had offered the British a second contingent. The offer was rather a formality and General Hutton was not even informed that it had been made and knew nothing of it until he saw a newspaper report.¹¹⁵⁶ The British Government did not reply. It was confident that when General Buller had arrived and taken charge of the situation, the few small reverses of the early days of the war would quickly be forgotten in a quick and easy victory. Black Week put an end to the amazing confidence in

General Buller. Field Marshal Lord Roberts was appointed as Commander in Chief in South Africa and, on 18 December, the Canadian offer was accepted six weeks after it had been made.

548. In the meantime, Hutton had not been idle, Nor had his wife. Mrs Hutton set out to organize a soldiers' wives League, a society which had been pioneered in England by Lady Woldeley and which Mrs. Hutton had also begun in New South Wales. The object was to bring together the wives of soldiers of all ranks "so that in sickness and in health they may be able to mutually aid and assist one another, and their families, in times of difficulty, trouble or distress." The wife of the District Officer Commanding was to be the vice president in each district, presiding over an executive board with six officers' wives and the wife of the regimental sergeant major or other senior non-commissioned officer. Mrs. Hutton would be president of each local league. The subscription was set at 25/- a year. The first project of the League, which soon had branches in Montreal, Ottawa and Toronto, was to send a letter to each member of the Contingent, along with a Testament, pencil, paper, a matchbox and a large bandanna handkerchief. The men were urged not to worry about their families for no one would be allowed to be in want.¹¹⁵⁷

549. Hutton, still regretful that he had been unable to get an appointment in South Africa, returned to his work with the Militia. From 15 - 17 November, he held another of the annual conferences with the District Officers Commanding which he wished to make a matter of routine.¹¹⁵⁸ On 19 December 1899, he addressed the students of the University of Toronto and on the following day, he attended a ceremony

at which the Governor General unveiled a plaque to the dead of the Northwest Campaign of 1885.¹¹⁵⁹

550. It was with a sense of relief that he could turn from this trivia to the organization of the Second Contingent. Its composition had been left up to the Canadian Government and there were none of the detailed provisions laid down in Chamberlain's telegram of 3 October. The only influence offered was that the preference was now for mounted men. Because of this vagueness and because no detailed plans had been made in advance, it was only 20 December 1899 that the order was issued. It announced that a regiment called the Canadian Mounted Rifles would be raised from men of the Militia cavalry units and from the Northwest Mounted Police, with a total strength of 531 men. The conditions were largely the same as for the First Contingent, save that the enlistment might be extended to one year. Lieutenant Colonel Mitson of the Royal Military College was appointed to the temporary command of the regiment. In addition, a brigade division of three batteries of field artillery, with a total strength of 539 men was authorized. One third of each battery was to be provided from the permanent force and the remainder would come from the Active Militia. Batteries were to be raised at Kingston, Ottawa and Quebec. Lieutenant Colonel Stone took temporary command of the brigade. The experience of the previous contingent was used in preparing the order for many of the administrative details which had been worked out from day to day in October could now be embodied in a single order.¹¹⁶¹ There were details which had to be worked out, however, such as the weapons of the Mounted Rifles (Lee-Enfield, bayonet and revolver)¹¹⁶² and whether they should receive pay as Active Militia or at the higher Mounted Police rate (the latter).¹¹⁶³

551. It soon was clear that an attempt to amalgamate the Mounted Police and the Cavalry in a single regiment were not going to work and that there would be unnecessary delays. Hutton therefore persuaded Borden to change the organization of the Mounted Rifles so that there would be two battalions of two squadrons each.¹¹⁶⁴ One of the battalions would be raised by the Royal Canadian Dragoons, with one squadron from Ontario and the other chiefly from Manitoba. The Mounted Police battalion was left to the Commissioner to organize.¹¹⁶⁵

552. The appointment of officers for the second contingent did not provoke the disputes of the first contingent. Hutton resented the appointment of Major Harold L. Borden, the Minister's son, to the 1st Battalion of the Canadian Mounted Rifles¹¹⁶⁶ but he had the sense not to resist it. The young man's career in the Militia had already been somewhat meteoric, having joined the King's Canadian Hussars as a provisional second lieutenant in April, 1897, but, as an only son, Harold was the Minister's sole delight and hope and he could refuse him nothing. Young Borden reverted to the rank of lieutenant in the contingent. The commanding officer of the 1st Battalion was Lieutenant Colonel F.L. Lessard, who had lately been the commanding officer of the Royal Canadian Dragoons. The Commissioner of the Northwest Mounted Police, Lieutenant Colonel L.W. Herchmer, took the command of the 2nd Battalion with Major S.B. Steele, veteran of 1870 and a superintendent in the police, as his second in command. Lieutenant Colonel C.W. Drury of the Royal School of Artillery at Kingston commanded the brigade of artillery. Two of his battery commanders were the commanders of permanent force field batteries, Major J.A.G. Hudon and Major G.H. Ogilvie and the third, Major W.G. Hurman, commanded a Militia field battery in Ottawa.

553. The real dispute arising from the 2nd Contingent was over the purchase of horses. In public statements, members of the Government had declared that, at such a moment of crisis, political favoritism was in abeyance. A large number of horses had to be purchased for the Canadian Mounted Rifles and, with the Minister's approval, boards were appointed, consisting of the Commissioner of the Northwest Mounted Police, Lieutenant Colonel Kitson and the District Officers Commanding who were concerned.¹¹⁶⁷ The purchasing had not been going on long when complaints began to reach Ottawa that Liberal horse dealers were not getting fair treatment. There were particular complaints against Colonel Kitson and his dealings with Major Hendrie, the commanding officer of the 2nd Field Battery of Hamilton and a strong Conservative. On 5 January 1900, the Minister summoned Kitson to Ottawa to examine his Horse Purchase Book and to give him some advice. Hutton, who was present, ridiculed the idea that Kitson had been favoring Hendrie and Kitson returned to Toronto on the same evening. On Monday, 8 January 1900, Hutton himself went down to Toronto to look over the horse buying. While he was there, Robert Beith, a prominent horse dealer and also a Liberal Member of Parliament, appeared and claimed to have instructions from the Minister to examine the horses. Hutton declared that he would have the same right as any other member of the public to look the animals over. Beith withdrew and at 5.00 p.m., Hutton received an angry telegram from the Minister accusing him of interfering with Beith and command that he be allowed to inspect each horse before it was shipped. Hutton, of course, complied, and the following day, Beith, two other horse dealers and a veterinarian examined the horses and rejected five as unsuitable. The

dealers also submitted estimated prices for the horses which were very much below what Kitson had paid. Unfortunately for their independence, they had been rival bidders for the supply of horses.

554. Hutton returned to Ottawa full of indignation. It was, he felt, an outrage on all propriety to send someone like Beith to spy on him. It was an insult to him and a reflection on a subordinate officer. On 12 January, he saw Borden and indicated his feelings. Borden immediately said that no offence had been intended and promised to thank Kitson for his work. Hutton assumed that the matter was closed until the following day when he received a minute from the Minister asking several questions about the purchases. Hutton promptly sent back a somewhat intemperate reply in which he told the Minister that the answers to several of the questions were available in his own office. This reply was returned by Borden with the note that it was "most unsatisfactory if not intentionally rude." Hutton carried his grievance to the Prime Minister the same afternoon, reporting on the insults which he had suffered and showing him the memorandum and his reply. Laurier was sympathetic and they two men had a long talk, during which the Prime Minister told of his colleague's suspicions of Hutton while the General explained why he had gone to the West Coast during the crisis and pleaded guilty only to having aroused patriotic enthusiasm in the Militia and to trying to strengthen the bonds with the old country. Laurier quietly observed that he could see little difference between this and politics and Hutton replied that, for an Imperial officer, it was little short of duty. Laurier then saw Borden and obtained a rather different view of Hutton's behaviour. The Minister of Militia was finding the General increasing impossible

to deal with and had become convinced that Hutton's only intention was to gain full control of the Department. This he was determined to resist to the limit of his ability. Laurier saw Hutton again on 16 January and told him that he had changed his mind about Hutton's reply to Borden's request for information and that the Minister had been quite justified. Hutton announced that he would lay the matter before the Governor General. He then left for Halifax to supervise the embarkation of the Second Contingent.¹¹⁶⁸

555. Armed with the experience of the First Contingent, the Militia Department authorities were able to ensure that the Second Contingent was even better equipped. There was also more time. A full month ensued between the order to raise the force and the departure of the first of the three ships which were to carry it on 20 January 1900. Additional time was also valuable because of the greater difficulties of mobilization in the midst of a Canadian winter. The main difficulty at Halifax proved to be the condition of the ships which the Government had arranged for the passage of the troops. Hutton inspected the loading of the Laurentian, the first ship to go, and discovered that the horses were cruelly overcrowded. The Government inspector, he discovered, had not dared to make a complaint since the ship belonged to the politically powerful Allan Line.¹¹⁶⁹ While in Halifax Hutton stayed with Lord William Seymour at "Bellevue", the residence of the British General Officer Commanding, and the two men appear to have resumed, temporarily, their good relations. The same was not true of Hutton and Borden. The two men had an altercation on the dockside as the Laurentian was being loaded and Hutton reported to Minto on the same day:

I have been distant with Dr. Borden & by the wild look, unkempt appearance & distraught attitude of the gentleman I gather that he is in a suppressed state of indignation & whiskey at having put himself in the wrong with me. 1170

Four days later, he again wrote to Minto to report that the embarkation was going well and that the troops looked well. He was full of indignation at the sudden announcement of the repatriation scheme for the Leisters. It was, he maintained, a miserable scheme to get the support of Ontario.

I am truly & deeply sick at heart over this Militia - it seems impossible to evolve order out of chaos & to make dirty water run clear when the political atmosphere polutes (sic) everything & no one goes for the public good. 1171

HUTTON'S DISMISSAL

556. Hutton had not many more days to endure the frustrations of the Canadian Militia Department. In his last interview with Laurier before coming down to Halifax, the Prime Minister had agreed that relations between Hutton and Borden were at an impasse. The only possible answer was to get rid of Hutton but to do so would involve possibly grave political dangers. Hutton seemed popular in the country and he could make charges of political influence and intrigue which would be damaging as the time for a General Election approached.

557. An indication of the dangers involved in attacking Hutton was given when Lord Strathcona, the Canadian High Commissioner in London and an extremely wealthy man, made his offer to raise and equip a regiment of mounted infantry for South Africa entirely at his own expense. Strathcona was a vigorous imperialist whose influence had already been brought into play to secure a Canadian contingent.¹¹⁷² His offer of 400 unmarried expert marksmen and horsemen from the Canadian West was made on 31 December 1899 and accepted two weeks later on 13 January 1900. Immediately, Strathcona

cabled Hutton to take the responsibility for raising and equipping it, authorizing him to draw up to £150,000 on his account in the Bank of Montreal. ^{1173*} Strathcona also made a point of requesting that the force should be raised with no reference to political considerations, an observation which caused the Government considerable annoyance by its implication that such considerations had affected the previous contingents. Strathcona, who had supported both the Liberals and the Conservatives during his long public life, wrote to Laurier on 19 January 1900 that he had meant no reflection on the way that the other contingents had been raised; indeed if he had felt that they had been based on political considerations, he would not have acted at all. He did repeat his request, however, that Hutton should be responsible for the detailed arrangements. ¹¹⁷⁴

558. The organization of Strathcona's Horse began on 1 February 1900. Lieutenant Colonel Steele was withdrawn from the 2nd Battalion of the Canadian Mounted Rifles and given command of the unit. Strathcona would have preferred that Lieutenant Colonel Sam Hughes be given the command and he made his favour for Hughes known but he was anxious not to interfere. ¹¹⁷⁵ The terms of service were the same as for the previous contingents and Lord Strathcona paid the officers and men at the Northwest Mounted Police rates of pay. The unit was concentrated at Ottawa and moved through Montreal to Halifax where it was embarked on the Monterey on 16 March 1900. ¹¹⁷⁶ Hutton, who had left Canada over two weeks before, had had little to do with its organization or equipment.

* Hutton told Minto on 24 January 1900 that he had heard about Strathcona's offer only from the newspapers. [MG27 II B 1 38, Hutton-Minto 24 Jan 1900]

559. The preference for Colonel Hughes was not unique to Lord Strathcona. Laurier had wondered how he could overcome the popularity of General Hutton in the public mind. Colonel Hughes provided the answer.

560. Events in South Africa had already gravely damaged the prestige of British officers, and Hutton had shared in the general devaluation. The case of Colonel Hughes provided the sort of particular example which public opinion needs as a focus for its feelings. When Hughes had gone off to South Africa in his humble capacity as a ~~v~~ivilian passenger on the Sardinian, Hutton believed that he had humbled "the Conservative Insurgent" as he liked to call him and also believed, prematurely, that his victory in reducing Hughes to tears of contrition was the supreme moment in which political influence on the Militia had been overcome.¹¹⁷⁷ He could not have been more mistaken. On 2 November 1899, he included a reference to Hughes in a telegram to South Africa in which he pointed out that Hughes was proceeding only as a passenger and that he would not be willing to recommend him for any military employment.¹¹⁷⁸ Naturally, when he reached Capetown, Hughes found that military employment was not to be had. His reputation as an imperialist, his status as a Canadian Member of Parliament and even his contacts cultivated while in London during the Jubilee celebrations of 1897 were all of no use to him. His sense of frustration and bitterness knew no bounds. To Laurier, on 27 December 1899, he wrote in desperation:

Again I appeal to you for simple justice. You can do it me. The military people here are anxious to help me, but say! "Your Govt is supreme over Genl Hutton. Why do not they appoint you. We will be delighted to recognize it.

Moreover I have had no cable of money as was understood and promised me.

I want fully \$100 here. Why do you not do me justice Sir Wilfred?

Please cable me some appointment and also by the time this reaches you - \$125.00 1179

561. Pressure on behalf of Hughes was not limited to the Colonel himself. There had already been very strong support for him in his struggle for a place on the Contingent. The Bobcaygeon Independent had explained that Hughes had been rejected because of the public dispute with Hutton at Niagara Camp the previous June and remarked:

Now you know why Col. Sam is not Major of the Contingent and when you see the General's scalp hanging from the tower of the Parliament buildings next spring, you will know how it came there. 1180

When there were reports from Cape town that Hughes was left there without employment, there was a revived interest in him and when, as Hughes and his friends made certain, it was clearly understood that Hutton was to blame for his idleness, there was widespread anger, even from newspapers which had not backed him before. The Toronto Globe which had only come to support Canadian participation after a hesitation and which closely reflected Liberal policy, called for an investigation of Hughes, grievances and announced that Canada "will not submit to have a good soldier humiliated or discouraged because his enthusiasm breaks the bonds of military red tape, or disturbs the dignity of anybody."¹¹⁸¹ On 2 February 1900, it published a lengthy letter from J.L. Hughes, Sam's brother, demanding that Hutton be the last officer sent to Canada "to irritate Canadians and to put Canadian loyalty to unnecessary strain by arrogance and red tape." Hutton was a "temporary tyrant" who had tried to rob an "enthusiastic patriot and soldier" of his right to fight for the Empire.¹¹⁸² Other papers were rather less restrained. The Galt Daily Reporter declared that "General Hutton came to Canada knowing it all, a martinet in smart clothes, with an elevated opinion of his

own merits and an enlarged idea of the dignity attaching to the office of Commander of the Forces in Canada."¹¹⁸³ Another Conservative newspaper, the Toronto Evening Telegram described the treatment of Hughes as an "outrage". "Col. Sam Hughes", it announced, "has more adaptability, more shrewdness, more capability for leadership in the sort of warfare which Britain has to wage in South Africa than Major General Hutton is ever likely to possess."¹¹⁸⁴

562. Such a storm of abuse made it much easier for the Government to consider relieving itself of the difficult General. Hutton played his own part in sustaining the agitation on behalf of Hughes. Friends of Hughes, including Lieutenant Colonel James Donville, were planning to move for the correspondence which had passed between Hughes and Hutton during the previous October. In a farewell speech to the men of "D" Battery at the Russell House in Ottawa, Hutton took the opportunity of warning friends of Hughes not to do so as they would place their hero in "a pitiable position". Later, Hutton was interviewed by the press on the same subject. He denied that he was responsible for Hughes' unemployment in South Africa, merely pointing out that it was not customary to appoint unrecommended officers. He also repeated what he had told the men of "D" Battery about the correspondence between them:

Those who have seen the correspondence so far - and all the letters are now before the government - are of the opinion that Colonel Hughes could not have been exactly in his right mind when he wrote in the manner in which he did. The incident possesses most unfortunate features - features that I trust will not again be repeated. ¹¹⁸⁵

When this report was published on 30 January 1900, it infuriated Hughes' supporters and embarrassed the Government. Hutton admitted that he had made it, only explaining that he had not intended the interview for publication. He did not explain how he had permitted the reporter to take his statement verbatim.¹¹⁸⁶