should provide herself with a permanent force through the simple expedient of paying the expenses of one or more British line regiment. It would be cheaper than raising a force in Canada and, he added a little tactlessly, a colonial regiment was liable to deteriorate in offiders and men.[76] He followed this proposal with a list of the advantages which were to be offered to the Canadians in forming their own permanent force. He recalled Granville's offer to allow officers and men to take service with the Canadians. Half pay officers were also to be allowed to take service and could revert to half pay when their services were finished. He had already had a number of offers from officers and men of the Royal Canadian Rifles, then being disbanded. There was some urgen cy in the formation of a permanent force of some kind because the fortresses at Isle-aux-Noix, and Kingston and the stations at St. Jean, Montreal, Toronto and Ottawa were being abandoned that year and he was aware that the Militia system, as then constituted, allowed no provision for permanent garrisons.[77]

39. It eventually became clear to Lindsay that the Canadian Government had no intention of either hiring a British battalion or raising any of its own. However, he was allowe d to confer wi th the Minister of Militia.[78] This meeting only confirmed that the Canadians were not interested in the transfer of officers and men and Lindsay had to work out other plans for the Militia. These were embodied in a very long memorandum which was sent to the Governor General on 26 July 1870. It was couched in more modest tones than the preceding memoranda and reflected a better appreciation of what could be expected from the Canadian cabinet. There would have to be garrisons for Quebec and Kingston -- 300 men for the former and 100 for the latter. Isle aux Noix would need 30 men to preserve it from the Fenians or, alternatively, it might be demolished. The garrisons should be artillery and Lindsay

recommended that they be "engrafted" to the militia as a means of spreading military instruction. To meet the Fenian menace, the three Imperial gunboats should be again fitted out as a far better answer on the water frontier than any number of infantry battalions. Along the 45th parallel from Huntingdon to Sherbrooke, there should be a corps of Mounted Rifles, paid a fixed sum annually in return for attending a number of drills, for knowing how to use a rifle and for keeping a horse. With an intelligent commander in each Military District, the force would be a basis for the future cavalry of the Dominion.

40. The proposals which Lindsay gave the most emphasis in his memorandum dealt with the appointment of a Major General to command the Militia when necessary, to act as military adviser to the Government and to do all those duties in respect to the Militia which had recently been assigned to the Commander in Chief in Britain in respect to the Reserve Forces:

> A professional man, whose rank and experience carry weight, is absolutely necessary at the head of a Militia of 40,000. Such a force must entail a large charge upon the Country, and unless it is well instructed, disciplines and equipped, and also well Commanded, and put into vigorous action when necessary, the money spent upon it is thrown away.

Such a general would have the staff pay of his rank and serve for five years only. "He should be young for his rank and have had experience in training soldiers." It would then be unnecessary for the Adjutant General to be in the regular army. Lindsay placed a special emphasis on the Deputy Adjutants-General. They, too, like all other staff officers, should be appointed for only five years and should be selected from the Brigade Majors or the best of the commanding officers.

41. Lindsay also saw that the Canadians would need a Control Department, the organization which the British had evolved by that time to cover the administrative needs of their

Army. There must also be an engineer and an artillery branch in the Militia to look after the stores then being acquired. An officer trained to inspect ordnance stores should be obtained immediately and should also serve a five year term.

42. The remainder of the memorandum dealt with more detailed matters. The artillery garrisons and the mounted rifles would provide a basis for the instruction of the Miliita cavalry and artillery but the infantry would remain a problem. Lindsay assumed that the Military Schools would be reopened although naturally on a very different basis. The Militia should be trained in camps and their musketry would be improved by encouraging the establishment of Rifle Associations. Like most others who inspected the Militia at this period, he complained about the boots of the City corps. These,* provided by the men themselves, were narrow, high-heeled and utterly unsuitable for marching. Above all, efficiency could only be achieved by training the officers. In turn, this would only be possible through the appointment of a General Officer and so Lindsay could close his memorandum on the point which he was to urge most strongly.[79]

43. It appeared to Lindsay as though the Canadians were no more prepared to heed these moderate suggestions than they were his earlier and more ambitious proposals. In the meantime, stores were being handed over of officials who had evidently no notion of what to do with them. In the middle of August he again urged on the Governor General the necessity of making some provision for the management of the valuable stores which were being presented to Canada. Many of the experienced storekeepers who had served the British were being retired and their services would be available at relatively low pay. He once again pressed the need for a qualified

---

* Of a type now known as Half-Wellingtons.

Inspector to be obtained from England.[80] He also sent a report of his recommendations to the Canadians to the War Office with an appeal that if they were approved of, they might be urged on the Canadians from a higher level, and with the full weight of the Imperial Government.[81] Cardwell's reply was cautious approval of most of Lindsay's suggestions save the proposal that Canada should pay for a British battalion. This, he explained, might lead to the conflicts of authority which had troubled similar arrangements in other colonies. Instead, he quoted the commitments which the Canadians had given in 1865 and since and pointed out that any obligations undertaken by Britain were no exoneration of Canada.[82] Even this cautious emphasis was moderated at the insistance of the Colonial Secretary.[83]

44. Throughout 1870, the Canadian Government and the Militia Department made little effort to adjust to the problems which would be created by theBritish withdrawal. Perhaps the limited time available for military matters was too completely devoted to the arrangements for the Red River Expedition and to meeting renewed Fenian threat along the border. Privy Council minutes make only the most scattered reference to the developing situation and it seems possible that most Ministers never believed that the British would carry their policy through.

THE RED RIVER EXPEDITIONS

45. The formation of a provisional government at the Red River and the exclusion of William MacDougall, meant that Canadian authority in the territory of Manitoba could only be established by the presence of an armed force. The British government would agree to allow its troops to participate in the expedition only under strict political and financial conditions. Lieutenant General Lindsay had been sent to Canada to ensure the conditions were met. From the

first, the force was to be composed of British regulars and Canadian Militia. Lindsay's original instructions limited him to 200 British infantry and a small detachment of artillery but subsequent negotiations increased the number and also gave Canada 3/4ths of the cost.[84]

46. The arrangements for any joint expedition are always difficult and, in this case, they were aggravated by Canadian reluctance and a hope that an undertaking which had dangerous political overtones need not begin. However, affairs at the Red River showed no signs of resolving themselves to Canadian satisfaction and the expedition was gotten underway. The contribution consisted of two battalions of Militia, each of a strength of 350 men, one recruited in Quebec and the other in Ontario. Colonel Robertson Ross, the Adjutant-General of the Militia, was responsible for the arrangements. The men were to be between 18 and 45 years of age, of good chara cter, sober habits and good physical condition. They were to be mustered by 1 May 1870, two weeks after the orders were issued. The men were to get free uniforms and kit, free rations and lodging and a pay, for privates, of $12.00 per month. Their engagement was to be for at least a year.[85] One of the men who joined was Sam Steele,* who was then commissioned in the Militia but who joined as a private. His account of the expedition bears out the record of endurance and hardihood which both British and Canadian soldiers established during this expedition.[86] It was also a triumph of planning and leadership by the commander of the expedition. His success in leading the Red River Expedition helped the reputation of Colonel Garnet Wolseley and sent him on his way to becoming one of the principle figures of later Victorian Britain. He had considerable praise for his men. In memoris written many years after, Wolseley observed:

---

* later Major General Sir Samuel Benfield Steele KCMG, CB.

> I can draw no distinction between the relative merits of the military value of the regular soldier and the Canadian militia man who went with me to Red River; each had arrived at Prince Arthur's landing with special attributes peculiarly their own, but by the time Fort Garry had been occupied, each had acquired the military virtues of the other. What it is that a large army of such men under some great leader could not achieve, I, for one, know not.[87]

Unfortunately, Wolseley did not have a correspondingly good opinion of Canadian political leaders as a result of his experience. He and his officers felt that French Canadian feeling had favoured Riel and opposed the expedition and that French Canadian members of the Cabinet, including Cartier, had reflected this feeling and had deliberately caused delays by dilatory arrangements and misinformation.[88] On his return, Wolseley published an account of the expedition in Blackwood's Magazine in which Canadian politicians, particularly the Minister of Public Works, were bitterly criticized. The Article provoked considerable comment in Canada but Cartier's view was that Wolseley's anger was more due to his being refused the Lieutenant Governorship of Manitoba.[89]

47. Four days after they had reached Fort Garry, the British members of the force began their journey back to the East and all had safely returned to Montreal by 14 October 1870. The two Canadian battalions remained until the spring when the force was reduced to two companies. They had not proven particularly good garrison troops, particularly in the tense situation which had followed the overthrow of the provisional government. During the march to the Red River, Wolseley had forbidden liquor, an experiment which he found highly satisfactory and which was to be regularly quoted in subsequent military discussion in Canada. No other part of his report seems to have stuck so securely in the public mind. However neither his men nor the residents of Manitoba were natural advocates of temperance; indeed

there were few other means of escape. Some of the men in the Ontario battalion had enlisted as patriotic Orangemen, determined to avenge the death of Thomas Scott. The mixture of fanaticism and alcohol led to a series of incidents of persecution of the métis. They were encouraged by a noisy minority of the English speaking settlers. The worst incident was the death of Elzear Goulet, a member of the court martial which had condemned Scott. He was seen in the streets of Winnipeg and a crowd, including militiamen, gathered. Goulet tried to make his escape to St. Boniface across the Red River. As he attempted to swim across, rocks were thrown and Goulet sank, either as a weak swimmer or through being struck by a rock.[90] Whatever the truth of either side's allegations, it does seem that the presence of the Canadian Militia did not particularly contribute to the restoration of peace and order in the Red River settlements and the reduction of the garrison was certainly sensible.

48. Unfortunately, the events at the Red River had attracted the attention of the Fenians. W.B. O'Donoghue, the late treasurer of the Riel government, persuaded John O'Neill, who had led several unsuccessful expeditions, to make a further attempt on Manitoba. O'Neill and a few followers crossed the border on 5 October 1871, rifled the Hudson's Bay Company post at Pembina and were promptly arrested by a party of American soldiers who had crossed the border in pursuit.[92] The Canadian Government learned of the planned invasion from the man who sold O'Neill his rifles. There was immediate alarm in Ottawa and plans were made for a relief expedition. In its unsettled state, Manitoba was in great danger. The Government was unaware that the majority of the metis had rallied strongly to the new government in the face of the Fenian threat and that Riel himself had been chosen by its members as the captain

of a volunteer company. O'Donoghue was arrested after the shambles of the O'Neill expedition by two French metis.[93]

49. Unaware of the exact situation in Manitoba, the Canadian Government ordered an expedition to be sent overland the day before despatches arrived from Governor Archibald. Lieutenant Colonel Osborne Smith, Deputy Adjutant-General at Montreal, who had distinguished himself at the engagement at Eccles Hill in 1870, was sent direct to Winnipeg to assume command. 200 men were raised, divided equally between Ontario and Quebec and for a period of engagement of six months, with a right to a further six months service. The men were collected at Collingwood under Captain Thomas Scott of the 42nd Brockville Battalion, a veteran of the 1870 march. So were many of his officers and men. They sailed on 21 October 1871, just nine days after the order had been issued for their formation. With winter fast approaching, time was very short. The men reached Prince Arthur's Landing on 21 October and immediately set off. Conditions were miserable from the outset. The weather was bitterly cold, with intermittent snow storms. Although ice was forming on the water, there were many places where the men had to jump into it to push their boats along. At other places, it was only three inches deep and empty boats were pushed through the mud. By 9 November, the force had reached the mouth of the Rainy River. The Wolseley expedition had gone farther north to follow a more watery route but Scott's men crossed overland. They did not have time to waste. When they reached the Lake of the Woods, the freeze-up had begun. The last eight miles were completed on foot in the teeth of a gale. Each man was burdened with his own kit and obliged to struggle along smooth ice. Some of the men were so exhausted that they finished the march on sleds. The expedition was practically caught by winter and might well have faced tragedy. Fortunately Colonel

Smith had used his time in Winnipeg to organize transport and relief. Scott and his men were met on the western side of the Lake of the Woods and assisted to Winnipeg which they reached on 18 November 1871. They had taken one month and four days from the moment the Cabinet had authorised their despatch compared to the three months of the Wolseley expedition. It was an impressive accomplishment.[94] Reinforcements were sent the following year to bring the Manitoba Force to a strength of 300 men.

REPLACING THE BRITISH GARRISON

50. Despite the appeals of General Lindsay and a little gentle pressure from the Imperial Government, the Canadian cabinet refused to be panicked into extravagance. If the British expected Canadian defence expenditures to raise to match the sums which had been spent by their Treasury in Canada, they were mistaken. The adjustments were made slowly and without any wish to add to Militia estimates. At the end of 1870, authority was given to conduct six Schools of Military Instruction for a total of 550 cadets. At Quebed, Halifax and Saint John, New Brunswick, the schools were to be conducted as usual by the British garrison but, at Toronto, Kingston and Montreal, they would have to be run by the Militia staff. A Deputy Adjutant-General was to act as Commandant and a Brigade Major as adjutant. If troops were required for drill purposes, they were to be taken from the Militia at 25¢ per person per time.[95]

51. The staff of the Department had also been worked out by this time. It was of modest extent. The Adjutant General had the assistance of a chief clerk, five ordinary clerks, an office keeper and a messenger. His only staff officer was Colonel Powell. There was an accounts Branch with five clerks and a messenger, and a Stores Branch

Branch with four. Lieutenant Colonel Wily, the chief clerk of the Stores Branch was retitled Director of Stores and Keeper of Military Properties during 1870 but his staff was not increased. The Minister had the services of three clerks and a messenger.[96]

52. During the summer of 1870, Lindsay had proposed the raising of a force of artillery to man the fortresses at Quebec and Kingston with the further possibility of a small detachment at Isle-aux-Noix. In his report for 1870, Colonel Robertson Ross developed this proposal. Already there had been some use of the militia called out for the Red River expedition to look after affairs in the East. Two depot companies for the two battalions had been authorised and these had both been stationed at Kingston. Another company had been left at Thunder Bay to guard stores. It had been brought back to Montreal to guard the stores on St. Helen's Island. The Government had provided itself with a sort of permanent force almost by accident. Robertson Ross proposed that two batteries of garrison artillery should be raised, as were the rifle battalions, by allowing a proportion of the men from the Militia garrison batteries to join them for twelve months at a time, to be replaced on a more or less rotational basis each year. The officers, non-commissioned officers and artificers would have to be employed on a more permanent basis. In this way, 170 trained gunners would be made available annually.[97]

53. The Government was sufficiently impressed to make provision for the formation of the two batteries in its estimates. It had also taken sufficient of General Lindsay's advice to appoint Captain G.A. French of the Royal Artillery to be "Inspector of Artillery and Warlike Stores" as of 1 December 1870.[98] It then did no more. The summer passed and autumn approached. Since the British Government was not

bluffing, the Citadel would soon stand empty. French, who had served for a number of years in Canada and who had played a considerable part in the development of the Militia artillery, proved so loyal a servant of his new masters as to gravely annoy the British military authorities who asked for his recall. Since the matter had aroused the anger of the Secretary of State for War, only a strong appeal for his services by Cartier saved him from return to regimental duty and probable oblivion.[99] In the middle of September, he was joined by a second Royal Artillery officer, Captain Thomas Bland Strange. Both officers held the local rank of lieutenant colonel in the Militia. With two experienced professional officers, it became possible to organize the two garrison batteries.

54. On 20 October 1871, a General Order was published, authorising the establishment of two batteries "in order to provide for the care and protection of the Forts, Magazines, Armaments and Warlike Stores, recently or about to be handed over to the Dominion Government,..."[100] The Batteries were also to serve as Schools of Gunnery, offering practical training for gunners and drivers and short courses for officers and non-commissioned officers. 'A' Battery was to be at Kingston, with a detachment at Toronto while 'B' Battery was stationed at Quebec and required to furnish a detachment for St. Helen's Island and a small guard for the Levis forts. The rates of pay were similar to those prevailing in the Militia. Privates received 50¢ per day and all ranks received rations of 1 lb. of meat and 1 lb. of bread each day. The officers and non-commissioned officers at the outset were to be selected for instruction for a course of three months. They might then advance to a long course of nine months. Those who were wanted for full time service could then be retrained provided they were within the establishment. The other ranks

for the batteries were required to be members of an artillery battery and those who sought to join direct were first required to enrol in a Militia battery for three years service. They could then serve in the battery for a year - or longer if they wished and if it was expedient. The men who had returned from the Red River Battalions and who were waiting at Kingston and at St. Helen's Island could be shared out between the batteries if they wished to join. Lieutenant Colonel French* was appointed to command the School of Gunnery at Kingston. A later order gave Strange the command of the school at Quebec.[101] There was a reference in the Order to the establishment of Schools of Gunnery at Halifax and Saint John but nothing more was heard of them.

55. The organization of the batteries had been left so late that the British garrison had left Quebec before Strange could begin. He was pleased by the officers he had been given. Capt Short became very highly regarded and his death while fighting a fire in the late 1880s was greatly regretted. The two lieutenants, Duchesnay and Holmes, later became Deputy Adjutants-General. His surgeon, Hubert Neilson, was to become the first Director-General of Medical Services. French's officers were to have comparable careers. Among his recruits was Sam Steele, back from Manitoba and waiting with his fellow riflemen at the Depot at Kingston. He and his brother were the 22nd and 23rd recruits to join. The non-commissioned officers were selected from the Depot. The chief instructor was John Mortimer, who had been sergeant major of the gunnery school at Shoesburyness and who had been released after 22 years of service. Other non-commissioned officer instructors came out in the spring.[102] Strange seem s to have obtained his non-commissioned officers from England while many of his men were French Canadians who had little

---

* promoted to Militia rank.

artillery training but quite as valuable a background in the logging camps.[103] Both batteries made up their strength by assigning quotas to the Militia batteries; French observed that the most efficient batteries sent the most men. The 10 batteries of M.D. 4 had produced only 3 men among them.[104]

TRAINING THE MILITIA

56. The withdrawal of the British troops, the despatch of expeditions to Manitoba and the formation of the Schools of Gunnery had not greatly affected the bulk of the Volunteers at the time. Three years of Fenian scares, however, had ensured regular and extensive training. The Report for 1870 showed that the nominal strength of the Militia was 44,519 and that all but two of the Military Districts exceeded their quota. A special return showed that 2,469 officers and 33,662 men were ready for immediate service on the frontier, not counting the 2,000 men of the Grand Trunk Brigade who were expected to defend only their own line.[105] Since the United States Regular Army consisted of 30,000 men, chiefly engaged with the Indians, there was presumably some for self-confidence.

57. In 1870, too, more of the Militia were trained in brigade camps where more ambitious manoeuvres could be carried out, corps could compare their efficiency with other units and training could progress beyond elementary drill. Above all, it could be supervised by staff officers.[106] However, the practice had continued of training for two days in one. With eight days in camp, it was difficult to train raw recruits to handle their rifles. At the same time, there was still a strain on the voluntary spirit in requiring any training at all. Robertson Ross found much indignation that a few were bearing the burden of defence while others did nothing. It was aggravated by a pay scale which gave $1.00

to each officer and 50¢ to each other rank. [One may assume that senior officers formed a large proportion of the aggrieved with whom the Adjutant-General consulted.]

58. By the following year, there had been progress. The strength of the Militia had fallen slightly to 43,174 but 34,414 of them had been trained and 22,544 of these had spent 16 days in brigade or divisional camp.[107] A camp was held in each District, either in June or September. For the first time all ranks were paid according to rank, ranging from $4.87 per day for a lieutenant colonel commanding a battalion to the standard 50¢ a day for a private. Rations were also provided and it was carefully stated that pay and rations would only be issued for days that the individual was in camp.[108] For the first time, too, an effort was made to give garrison artillery batteries training as artillery. Hitherto, for lack of equipment, instructors or money, they had really only undergone instruction as a form of second class infantry. Some problems persisted. M.E. 1 in Western Ontario and M.Ds. 5 and 6 in Quebec still had difficulty in filling the ranks of their corps and their Deputy Adjutants-General were unanimous in demanding a recourse to the ballot. Colonel French, who had gathered 13 artillery batteries at Fort Henry in Kingston, discovered that some of them had had serious difficulty. The garrison artillery from Quebec had been obliged to recruit a number of very small men although their work demanded considerable physical strength. Battery commanders explained that it was impossible to persuade better men to come. In some cases, men had been promised three days leave as part of their camp simply to induce them to attend.[109]

59. There was one strong dissenter to the introduction of the ballot. Lieutenant Colonel William Durie, Deputy Adjutant-General of M.D. 2, who had been a lieutenant colonel in the Militia since 1856, was convinced that

balloted men would never turn out as quickly as volunteers while the voluntary system had proved itself in the past. He felt that regular issues of clothing, company rifle ranges and a little pay for extra drills between camps would solve the problems of the force. He also pointed out the little meannesses which soured the men. Since there were no plates or baskets issued during the camps, men had been obliged to collect the bread in their blankets. There were no rations authorised for the first day in camp and so the men became hungry and ate the whole of the second day's ration for breakfast.[110]

60. 1871 was a crucial year for the Volunteer system for it marked the end of the three years engagement which the men had made on 1 October 1868. Robertson Ross had reason to be concerned about the number of men who would re-engage and the difficulty which commanding officers would find in filling the ranks of their corps with suitable men. It was discouraging for him to discover that only one of his Deputy Adjutants-General was opposed to the ballot and that a majority felt that it would be necessary.

61. For all the despondency, 1872 found a total of 30,144 men prepared to attend camp for 16 days. The Adjutant-General felt that real progress had been made, and that it was due to the Brigade camps, where the men were away from home and all distractions. Now he proposed that the full force be trained at a cost of $1,500,000 per year:

> Although happily there seems every prospect at present that the peace of the world may not be disturbed, yet with the acquisition of the great North West comes new responsibilities, new and unforeseen military demands may therefore have to be met, and at all times the Force should be made as efficient as possible, and held available to turn out at short notice in support of internal law and order.[111]

On the other hand, if Militia estimates were to be reduced, then the best solution would be to train the full number of

men for a shorter period of time rather than reduce the number authorised to be trained.

62. Despite the strong numbers in camp, several Districts had fallen well below their quotas. Colonel Durie was only 27 men short but M.Ds. 1 and 3 were each short 1,500 men and M.D. 4 had 1,365 missing out of a total of 3,228. In M.D. 6, there were only 1184 men out of an authorised strength of 3,051 and Colonel D'Orsonnens complained that his officers were dispirited and that some of the men had been in the Militia for fourteen years. In the two Maritime provinces, there were also serious shortages.[112]

63. Along with further calls for the imposition of the ballot, there were further explanations for the failure to recruit. Many of them centred around the uniform. In the first place, there was provision for its replacement only every five years. This meant that a recruit might be expected to wear clothing which had been used for as much as three years. In many cases, it was not merely used but worn out. Since the men had only one suit, even one summer camp, drilling, performing fatigues and sleeping, caused severe wear. There were many men who protested against the official forage cap, a "pillbox" design which protected the head from neither sun nor rain and which, in the eyes of many men looked rediculous.

64. One unit which seemed to cause little trouble was the Grand Trunk Railway Brigade, a special organization of two brigades of garrison artillery and two rifle battalions, composed entirely of employees of the Grnad Trunk Railway. Since many of their employees were military veterans, the Brigade must have seemed to the directors an ideal way to combine patriotism and corporate discipline. The Brigade was even called out to break strikes.[113] At the re-enrolment of 1871, the entire Brigade re-enlisted <u>en masse</u>. This was

one application of the voluntary system in which employers seem to have given considerable co-operation.

65. Another small aspect of the Militia which seemed almost as anomalous as the Grand Trunk Railway Brigade were the two small gunboats, the Prince Alfred and the Rescue. The Militia Department had inherited them from the British and they were used throughout the Fenian Raids as patrols. The Prince Alfred, a large and powerful lake tug, could carry four guns but it was too large to pass through the Welland Canal. The Rescue was based on Kingston. It was very old and rather slow and could manage two guns. The two vessels were managed by a Mr. G.H. Wyatt, Superintendent of Gunboats, whose thankless task it was to fit them out annually. In 1870, he was bold enough to propose that $26,000 be spent to build a replacement for the Rescue which was past saving.[114] The Prince Alfred was used that year and the next as a training ship for garrison artillery, providing, doubtless, a pleasant summer and some little known procedents for the Canadian artillery.[115] In 1872, the Prince Alfred was used in M.D. 1 to carry two battalions to the concentration at Windsor but the Rescue does not appear to have stirred. At the beginning of 1873, the Canadian government decided to liquidate its small navy.*

---

* On 20 January 1873, the Prince Alfred and the Rescue, then laid up at Chatham and Hamilton respectively, were handed over to the Department of Marine and Fisheries by Hector Langevin, then acting as Minister of Militia after Cartier's death. Eight days later, authority was asked to sell the Rescue and on 21 March 1873, George Futvoye announced that the only tender had come from the St. Lawrence Tow Boat Company. Langevin promptly recommended acceptance. Two months later, in May, he again recommended that the tender be accepted. It was delivered to the company on 6 June 1873 and by 11 February 1874, Thomas McGreevy, the president of the company had completed his payments. On 7 May 1874, the Prince Alfred was again handed over to the Department of Marine and Fisheries although there is no record of it ever being handed back to the Militia Department in the interval. [R.G. 9, II A 21, 22.]

A GENERAL OFFICER COMMANDING

66. As has been seen, the recommendation among many to which General Lindsay had attached most importance was the appointment of a British Major General to the command of the Canadian Militia. There was an urgent need for a real commander for the force. Robertson Ross made the same point in his Report for 1870. His change, however, was to be more sweeping. In one of the longest sentences in a Militia Report, he recommended that the Adjutant-General be commissioned as a major general and styled as such, that his deputy be promoted to colonel and appointed Adjutant-General and that all the Deputy Adjutants-General should also be promoted to be colonels of the staff. In explanation, he pointed out that cases had arisen of Deputy Adjutants-General being junior in date of commissions to lieutenant colonels in their Districts. Foreseeing the objection that the command in an emergency would go to an Imperial Commander in Chief, he explained that a Canadian General Officer Commanding would simply function under an Imperial officer. There were other motives in Robertson Ross's proposal for he added the recommendation that all staff appointments should be for five years, that they should be obtained only after examination and that they should not be renewable in the same post. It is evident, even from the Militia Reports, that some of Cartier's staff appointments had been better than others.

67. Robertson Ross's annual report eventually reached the War Office where this section received some attention. Lindsay (now Sir James) was at the War Office as Inspector General of Reserve Forces and he was invited to give his somewhat predictable opinion. It was evident that his view laid rather greater stress on the Imperial connection than on the direct command of the Canadian Militia. What he wanted was a General who would be appointed by the Queen with the

concurrence of the Governor General and the Dominion Parliament, who would have the military command and supervision of the Militia and who would be responsible that unified Imperial military policy was carried out. What Lindsay did not want was for Robertson Ross to become the Major General and he bridled at the suggestion, implicit in the Report, that the present Adjutant-General believed himself to be commanding the Militia in all but name. The Adjutant-General of the Militia, he felt, should be appointed by the Dominion Government, to act as an assistant to the General and to have under him the civil duties connected with finance and stores. Lindsay was particularly adamant in refusing to recommend Robertson Ross. As a commanding officer, he had twice been a failure and he had given little assistance during the Red River Expedition. "If he had been left to himself, the Militia would have been found half equipped".[117] Cardwell passed this opinion to the Colonial Secretary with his partial concurrence. He had some doubts as to whether the observations would be as valid when the Imperial forces would have been withdrawn to Halifax.[118]

68. In the session of 1871, a Militia Act amendment was passed to extend its effect. As a result of some pressure from private members, a further clause was included to allow the appointment of colonels in the Militia but no rank higher than major general in peacetime. This added one step to the promotion ladder.[119] However, no further action was taken for some time. At the beginning of 1872, Cartier sent a long explanation of his planned promotions to the Colonial Office, suggesting that in deference to Parliament and to the expectations of the officers, promotion could no longer be delayed. The intention was to make the Adjutant General a Major General and the other staff officers were to be colonels. In additional justification, Cartier drew attention to the

Governor General's praise of the 1871 training camps and the fact that the latest enrolment of the Reserve Militia had found 694,570 men. In the event of an emergency, the Imperial Government would hardly send less than a general and the Militia Act already provided that a British officer of the Regular Army would always take seniority over a Militia officer of the same rank. After some months delay, the War Office agreed on the understanding that the promotions were to Militia rank only.[121] By the time the reply reached Canada, the summer elections of 1872 were in full progress. Cartier, already a dying man, was defeated in his constituency of Montreal East. He was quickly provided with another seat in Manitoba but the affairs of the Militia Department were clearly beyond him. Shortly after the election, he left for England to seek medical advice. He never returned. During the remaining troubled year of its life, the Macdonald Government had more urgent concerns than the raising in rank of senior Militia officers. In October, when there was some likelihood of the matter being raised in Cabinet, the Governor General, Lord Dufferin, asked Macdonald to hold the matter over until he could discuss it with him.[122] The opportunity was lost.

69. By the time the matter could be raised again, over a year had gone by. At the beginning of 1873, with no apparent formal authorization, Robertson Ross began describing himself as "Colonel commanding the Militia and Adjutant-General"[123] but no one took the hint. When he resigned in August, at the end of his five year tenure, he returned to England without even the transient glory of a Militia major Generalcy.* On 7 November 1873 Alexander Mackenzie formed

---

* Hope was deferred until 1880 when he became a major general through seniority.

his Liberal government. With the enthusiasm of most new ministries, the Liberals were determined to clear away the unfinished business which they had inherited. A major need was to obtain a new Adjutant-General of the Militia. Lieutenant Colonel Walker Powell had been Acting Adjutant General since 22 August 1873 but under the statute, as a Canadian Militia officer, he could not obtain the appointment. While the Liberals might have been pleased to promote an old colleague, they were not yet prepared to suggest that a British officer was unnecessary. A list of possible appointments was obtained by the Governor General, but Lord Dufferin, too, was anxious for the appointment of a Major General. It was probably this which had caused him to delay discussion by the Conservative cabinet some eighteen months earlier. The list of officers was not particularly impressive, Dufferin explained to the new Prime Minister, but:

> Should you however decide upon having an Imperial General Officer with a Canadian Adjutant General under him, the field of choice would be much enlarged, and I would write a very strong letter to the Duke of Cambridge urging him to a good choice. I will also take care that the Secretary for War and the Colonial Secretary should be consulted, reserving, however, to yourself and colleagues the ultimate choice and decision.[124]

70. The proposal caused some further delay but eventually the Government appears to have been converted. One major problem was the question of salary. Having been accustomed to paying the Adjutant-General $4,000. there was no desire to pay any more. A common criticism of the Militia among all politicians was that the staff was an extravagance and the Liberals could hardly redeem their election promises of economy and retrenchment by increasing it. Then there was some difficulty in working out the exact terms with the War Office through the Colonial Office. As finally settled, the British general was to have command of the Militia under the Minister. His tenure was to be for five years and his salary

would be $4,000 per year in addition to his British pay - the half pay of his rank. He would also be entitled to $1,000 for an aide-de-camp of his own choice. While he was to receive no further allowances, he would be reimbursed for any necessary travelling expenses.[124] Both the Governor General and the Colonial Office communicated a sense of urgency in getting the appointment arranged.[125]

71. The Duke of Cambridge, as Field Marshal Commanding in Chief, was responsible for such appointments. He submitted a list of five officers, headed by Major General Wolseley. After some informal correspondence, and for unknown reasons, the Canadian government chose the second name on the list, Major General Edward Selby Smyth.[126]* Selby Smyth matched a few of the qualifications which Lindsay had suggested some four years before. An infantry officer, he had served in several campaigns in India and South Africa, being selected for the staff at a fairly young age. His only apparent experience with irregulars had been a term as Inspector-General of the Irish Militia during the '60s. Although he had only been promoted to Major-General in 1870, he already stood in the top half of the seniority list for his rank. His previous appointment had been as commander of the troops on the island of Mauritius, an appointment which had given him two opportunities to act for the Governor. In 1874, Selby Smyth was 54 years old.[127]

72. Despite the haste to get Selby Smyth to Canada, he could not become the commanding officer of the Militia officially until the Act was amended. Although Militia General Orders described him as assuming the command of the

---

* When Panet interviewed Alexander Mackenzie in 1880 on this matter in 1880, the only explanation for passing over Wolseley was that Selby Smyth seemed to be the better qualified.

Militia from the time of his arrival,[128] he was actually the Adjutant-General. Walker Powell reverted to the title of Deputy Adjutant-General but continued to look after the administration of the force and to sign the orders.

73. A Bill to amend the Act was introduced in the session of 1875, providing for the appointment of an officer to command the Dominion Militia at $4,000 per year and for an Adjutant-General at $2,600. Nothing was said about promotion for the Deputy Adjutants-General of the Military Districts. Predictably, the debate was largely devoted to charging the Government with colossal extravagance in administering the Militia although members on both sides also regretted that Walker Powell's salary was to be reduced from the $4,000 he had been drawing for well over a year as Acting Adjutant-General. The Government spokesmen referred vaguely to allowances which would help to make up the difference. It was also pointed out that if the Imperial Government had not agreed to continue the General's British pay, Canada would have had to offer a rather larger sum. The other main theme was that the appointment should be open to a Canadian officer. While no member went to the limit of declaring that a British officer should not be appointed for the present, a number wished to amend the bill to remove the exclusion of Canadians. Their numbers were not sufficient, however, to bring serious pressure on the Government.[129] The new appointments took effect from 20 April 1875 while Walker Powell's colonelcy was dated back to 22 August 1873 when he had begun to act as Adjutant-General.[130]

THE LIBERAL MINISTRY

74. The difficulties in the Government during 1873 were reflected in the state of the Militia. It was in that year that Canada first began to feel the effects of the

world-wide depression of the 1870s. With declining revenues and a developing crisis of confidence in economic progress, the reflex reaction of the Government was to lower expenditures. The Militia was an obvious target. There were few Members in Parliament who did not believe that economies were possible and the numbrous M.Ps. who were also militia officers were almost united in believing that the first target should be the staff officers. In fact, this proved more difficult than some members were prepared to admit since the Government had appointed a high proportion of the officers from among its own political friends. In addition, the staff was none too large for its many duties, particularly when some of the officers looked upon their positions as sinecures. It was easier to make reductions in the money spent on training. 1873 saw a return to local training. Only 19,963 men were drilled that year, 10,000 less than the year before. The system created many difficulties. In rural areas, men might have to tramp as far as eight miles to the place of drill and, since no rations were authorized for that year, they would have to tramp home at night. In the cities, employers were less willing than ever to allow their men leave to drill. With the growing economic crisis, workers were in no mood to risk their jobs. Above all, in Walker Powell's view, there was a decline in the volunteering spirit and not even an increase in the private's basis pay would help. To keep up a force of 40,000, resort to the ballot would be necessary.[131] The reports from the Districts indicated other reasons why the service had lost popularity. While one of the Quebec Districts reported that the men preferred to drill in their own areas, others indicated that the men had missed their opportunity to get away from home for a few weeks.[132] For some units, there had been an opportunity for an eight day camp but in M.D. 3, the men and their medical officers had agreed that one blanket was not enough.

75. Since the inception of the Volunteer Militia, there had been an implicit distinction between the City and the rural corps. The latter tended to be based on one or more counties, with companies established in small towns and villages. Its officers were selected from among the more prominent farmers but in most parts of the Dominion, this did not mean that they were also very prosperous. The rural corps normally assembled only once a year for training. The city corps, particularly in larger centres, had no regional unity but depended on their organization and cohesion on developing their own cohesion or on inheriting that of a parent organization. The Governor General's Body Guard of Toronto was created and maintained almost entirely by the Denison family. Other battalions became clubs for the urban middle class, sometimes really on a social or political basis but also as a military outlet for their members. Since the members lived in close proximity, they could be drilled regularly through the year and so city corps were always in being. In an age when formal military drill was the be all and end all of Militia training, the city battalions always appeared more efficient than the rural corps. With more wealthy officers willing to contribute heavily to their units, It was possible to provide better uniforms, facilities and attractions and hence to attract more suitable recruits. In return, militia officers acquired a considerable support to their self-esteem and a pleasing sense of being more partiotic than their neighbours.

76. In the age of stringency which began in 1873, the difference between the rural and the city corps grew steadily. At the same time, it would be easy to overestimate the advantages of the city corps. Rural corps could normally obtain men for training provided the camps were not called during either the sowing or the harvesting seasons. They could

also obtain horses. City corps could only train at night or on week-ends. Horses were difficult to obtain save from livery stables at much higher rates than the Militia Department was prepared to pay. Even drill halls were lacking. For two decades the militia in Toronto had none.[133] In Montreal, the drill shed collapsed in 1873 and was not rebuilt for many years. The Corporation of Montreal was responsible for replacing it but no serious pressure was applied. In the meantime, the wreck lay unrepaired while scattered parts of the building which still stood were used for the storage of arms. The city corps shared in the decay of the Militia from the modest standard achieved in 1872.

77. For this decay, Mackenzie's government bore the blame. This is perhaps unfair. Faced with a depression, it applied the solution which contemporary thought considered wise -- it cut expenditure. By reducing Militia estimates, it showed a sound understanding of Canada's defence needs in the era after the British withdrawal and particularly after the Treaty of Washington. The first event meant that either the Canadian Militia would have to become very much more efficient and expensive and so become an effective field army or else it would not be a dependable protection against the United States. No Canadian political figure would have put it in this way publicly but also no Canadian would have believed that his country could provide an effective and unaided military resistance to the United States. The importance of the Treaty of Washington made this unnecessary in any case. At the cost of some painful sacrifices, the significant causes of difference between Canada and the United States were eliminated. Not only was Canada unable to protect herself against the United States, she had no need to.

78. Why, then, was a Militia maintained at all? The answer is complex and, in some respects, unflattering. In

In the first place, political leaders, like other men and women, do not always think through to coldly logical conclusions. If they do, they tend not to be re-elected. The Militia was there, it was of long standing, it was embellished with myths from the War of 1812 and even from the ancien regime. It was, in other words, an institution of a sort that the conservative Canadian politician does not take lightly. In the second place, the Militia represented a large if incalculable political influence. It was represented in the House of Commons and amongst the wealthy backers of both parties. It was also represented among the people. Even that organ of conservative Reformism, the Globe, attacked the fuss and feathers of military pomp only to cast into relief the sterling qualities of the neglected rural militiamen. It was also an instrument of political influence by the government. Militia commissions took the place of the British Honours List as an inexpensive reward for service. The enthusiasm for militia drill pay among rural M.Ps. reflected the thousands of voters who would be receiving a periodic pittance from a thoughtful government. Finally, there were contracts, positions on the staff and in the permanent corps, thousands of favours to be distributed. In the third place, the Militia might be useful. It was used with a frequency which now seems surprising in aid of the civil power. And there might be a war and every Government bore somewhere in its collective consciousness the fearful responsibility to be prepared.

79. Mackenzie was not particularly fortunate in his Ministers of Militia. Having decided to allot the portfolio to one of the Nova Scotia representatives in the Cabinet, his choice fell on Lieutenant Colonel William Ross from Cape Breton Island. In addition to being a Militia officer, Ross had represented Victoria in the Nova Scotia legislature for eight years and in the Dominion Parliament

for six. These appear to have been his sole claim to office for, as Mackenzie's biographer observes, he was a disappointment from the beginning. He was boastful, indiscreet, fond of the trappings of office but not of its work. He was also of dubious political morality.[135] After six months, Mackenzie had had enough. Alfred Jones, one of the members of Halifax and one of his most important Nova Scotia supporters, proposed William Vail as an alternative. Vail had been provincial and financial secretary in the Annand government but he was now anxious to retire. He would also serve as a better leader for the Nova Scotia members than Jones, whose political background was rather shorter.[136] Mackenzie agreed and Vail was elected for Digby. Ross had no intention of giving way gracefully. At length, Mackenzie gave him thirty hours to make up his mind to resign. In a lengthy protest, Ross complained that it did his Nova Scotia colleagues no credit to go outside their ranks for Vail. He had found his Department "a heap of confusion" with decisions required on every hand and he had not even been allowed a capable Deputy. There had been no complaints of his department - indeed there had been compliments on the careful way in which he had consulted others. He was not even impressed with the offer of the Collectorship at Halifax which was to be his reward for going quietly.[137] Sober second thoughts did persuade him to go while there was any reward at all, but having handed in his resignation,[138] he then sought to recall it. "No member of any Government of Canada has been so harshly and cruelly used as I have been" he complained.[139] Nevertheless, a Collectorship is an attractive thing and Ross's resignation took effect from 29 September 1874.[140] "How such a gobemouche was ever named by his fellows as a cabinet minister is a mystery,"[141] Mackenzie commented to Jones some months later.

80. Unfortunately, Vail did not prove as valuable as some of his friends had promised. Mackenzie was notoriously

unable to find satisfaction in his cabinet ministers and Vail, as he discouvered, could not be let loose.[142] In 1877, it emerged that Vail had an interest in a newspaper called the Citizen which had accepted government advertising. Under the Independence of Parliament Act, he thereby forfeited his seat. The tempest of the times had turned against the Liberals and Vail doubted that he could regain his seat for Digby. Above all, he had no desire to face a campaign in which his opponents would be able to cry corruption at him. He was even prepared to resign and leave his seat unrepresented for a session.[143] It was an embarrassing problem for Mackenzie and some of his colleagues, who tended to take a serious view of such matters. David Mills, for one, was satisfied that Parliament should not be asked to pass a special bill to relieve Vail and that he should take his chances with the electors.[144] Mackenzie agreed and Vail was driven into the contest. Despite the efforts of his workers and the most vigourous use of the power of patronage,[145] Vail was defeated. He blamed the disaster - which had become unexpected - on the labours of a Conservative organizer named Thibault among the French Canadians. Dr. Tupper had also played his part by attending a Baptist service and conspicuously leaving a twenty d llar bill in the plate. The real villain, however, was the new right of secret voting:

> The fact is no Election can be considered safe under the Ballot. While the system was new to our people, they voted as they agreed to, now they are fully up to the dodge of talking one way and voting another, and I fear every election under the ballot will be worse and worse. If I could have my way, I wd strike the law off the statute book with as little delay as possible. No Govt can stand over five years under this system of voting.[146]

Mackenzie seems to have shown little regret at his loss of a minister. In a letter to his brother, he described him as a very weak man who had managed his county very badly indeed.