

"In debate he was so awkward that I fairly dreaded his getting on his feet."¹⁴⁷ Perhaps nothing demonstrated the failings in Vail's character so quickly as his post election demand that not one dollar be put in the estimates for Digby County. "If there is anything in for Metigar breakwater or any other place, please have it taken out. The Govt will be stronger¹⁴⁸ and the present member weaker if you take this course."

81. The Minister for the remainder of Mackenzie's period in office was Alfred Gilpin Jones, who had originally recommended Vail. Like many ministers appointed in the last months of a Government, he did not have an opportunity to make his weight felt in his department. In the House, he was subjected to a lengthy and bitter attack by Macdonald and the Conservatives for his alleged part in disloyal demonstrations in Halifax at the time of Confederation.¹⁴⁹ None of this could help to strengthen the Government.

82. Another Liberal appointment long outlasted the Mackenzie Government. William Ross had complained about his lack of an efficient Deputy Minister. Georges Furtvoye, the first Deputy, is a somewhat shadowy figure of whom little is known. He left office on 10 January 1875. His replacement was Colonel C. Eugene Panet, who had been colonel of the 9th Quebec Voltigeurs. He was a son of the Hon. Philippe Panet, the first Speaker of the Legislature of Lower Canada. Colonel Panet had been trained as a lawyer. In 1874, Mackenzie had appointed him to the Senate but a year later he was offered and accepted the post of Deputy Minister of Militia. Perhaps at the age of 45 he felt himself too young for the Red Chamber.

83. Lord Dufferin's Military Secretary was Lieutenant Colonel Henry Charles Fletcher of the Scots Fusilier Guards. At the end of 1873, he published a pamphlet on the Canadian Militia which offered some perceptive comments on its structure.

There were three ways of determining military policy, Fletcher observed:

Given the number of men required, and the efficiency to which they are so attain, what amount of money will be annually necessary? Or, as it is stated in Canada - Given the amount of money, and the number of men required, what is to be the standard of efficiency? Or again - Given the amount of money and the required efficiency, how many men can be raised? 150

The story of the next thirty years in the Canadian Militia was the record of attempts by military authorities to persuade the Cabinet to abandon the second equation in favour of the first or third. Only one senior military official ever recommended the second course: ¹⁵¹ Colonel Robertson Ross, and he left in 1873. Fletcher reported that the estimates, for the Militia were \$1,549,000 in 1872 but that they had been reduced greatly in 1873 and of the minimum expenditure had not been set at \$1,000,000, they would have been reduced still farther. With this expenditure, the results were very mixed. Some units were better than the best British Militia - others were worse than the worst. The chief fault throughout was that the men did not know their defects. The only possible enemy for Canada was its neighbour, the United States. Even Fletcher had to admit that the likelihood of war had been so reduced as to cause doubt as to the need for any defence expenditure and could and could only protest that peace never lasts very long, that Britain could not send sufficient troops and that a military force was part of ¹⁵² self-government.

84. To improve the Militia, Fletcher urged the establishment of three schools, each with a small force of cavalry, artillery and infantry. The Militia would be divided into three districts, each served by one of the schools. The full time members of the school units would be fitted into Militia units during any emergency. Normally, they would

serve as instructors and non-commissioned officers during the training period. Most would serve for only a year although they would be allowed to re-engage for five. Long service, however, would be discouraged. For the remainder of the Militia, Fletcher recommended that officers be required to train at the schools, and that there should be provision for transfer of elderly and unfit officers to the reserve. For city units, he suggested the English practice of pitching camp near where the men worked and arranging morning and evening drills.¹⁵³

85. Copies of the pamphlet were sent to both Alexander Mackenzie and Sir John A. Macdonald and both men appear to have read it attentively. Macdonald pointed out two errors of fact and went so far as to be surprised at the modest force proposed.¹⁵⁴ Mackenzie also sent his personal thanks and raised, very delicately, the possibility of a financial reward. The Governor General, on behalf of his secretary, suggested that an Order in Council expressing the thanks of the Government would be sufficient.¹⁵⁵

86. It seemed to be easier for the Government to approve of Fletcher's sentiments than to put them into effect. In 1874, it was decided that only 30,000 men could be drilled and paid. A number of units which had been authorized but not equipped were removed from the Militia. Then all companies which had mustered less than 30 men the previous year were cut off. Finally, to bring the total within the limit, the efficient Grand Trunk Railway Brigade was excluded from training.¹⁵⁶ Even at that, companies were reduced to 40 other ranks and training was limited to 12 days including travelling time. As a compensation, the pay of lower ranks was increased. Privates were to be paid 60¢ a day. Cheese and barley were added to the authorized Rations.¹⁵⁷ In both

In both years, city corps were allowed to drill at local headquarters if circumstances so required (and they nearly always did). Only the city field artillery batteries were required to train in camp. Training was to be in brigade camps so far as possible but since there was transportation authorized only for units within fifty miles of camp many could not attend in practice. In 1876, the limitations were even more rigorous since the estimates were reduced to \$650,000. Companies remained at their reduced strength and camps were limited to 8 days (12 for the field artillery) only 23,000 men were allowed to be drilled but the selection was left to the Deputy Adjutants-General by assigning quotas to the Military Districts. That year, there were no large camps and corps were required to drill at local headquarters. In rural corps, this meant that they would have to drill as companies. The pay was reduced to the old level of 50¢ a day for other ranks and \$1.00 for officers, regardless of rank. 25¢¹⁵⁹ was allowed per day in lieu of rations. Much the same system prevailed in 1877 and again in 1878 although in both years the number of men authorized to drill was reduced to 20,000 and the number of days was increased to 12.¹⁶⁰

87. The consequences for the Militia were, of course, serious. Since the overall strength of the force was not reduced, the quota system meant that only half the force was trained each year. The annual orders gave a priority by which units were to be selected for training. Field artillery batteries were to be chosen first so that they, at least, had the advantage of annual training. At first Deputy Adjutants-General could select the remainder by drawing lots but in 1878, a standard order was established which varied little thereafter. After field batteries, garrison artillery with guns of position were to be chosen. Then, city corps,

followed by the corps which had not drilled the previous year and finally the corps which could gather the most companies at their local headquarters without transportation costs. In practice, this favoured the field artillery and the city corps for the majority of garrison artillery had no guns at hand. In most rural districts, rural battalions were fortunate to drill in alternate years and some drilled only three years. Since the engagement for men in the ranks, was three years, men could hope to drill no more than twice -- a total of 24 days - during their enlistment and many would only attend one camp. Even the 12 days included one Sunday and two days for travelling. When companies drilled locally, the old practice of two drill days per day was common. Even with annual drill, it had been difficult to keep rural battalions together. With two years separating the training periods, it became almost impossible and many battalions became disorganized. A more common weakness was for battalions to be composed entirely of new men for each camp. Only the most energetic and wealthy commanding officers could keep even a nucleus of his men together between camps. Therefore, when their corps were selected for drill, they had to set to work to fill up the ranks with any men who were available and there was more than a chance that these would be local wastrels and idlers. The common wage in rural areas and even in the cities was \$1.00 per day and the Militia pay of 50¢ was unlikely to attract any man who was neither an enthusiast nor capable of earning more. Since the annual drill depended on the annual appropriation by Parliament, and was further delayed by the time taken to work out District quotas and obtain Ministerial approval, the order for the annual training appeared only in May. In William Ross's inglorious period of office, it appeared only in June. There was a further delay while local staff officers worked out which unit would be allowed to train. Since the most favourable time for training

in rural areas was during the last two weeks in June, commanding officers had very little time to get their battalions ready for the camp.

88. There were other things wrong with the Militia besides its lack of training. The equipment which it had inherited from the British was deteriorating rapidly. Again, the greatest weakness was in the rural areas where company commanders were paid a small allowance for storing the weapons and accoutrements of their men. The sum was small and the captains had many other things to concern them and the equipment was badly neglected. Selby Smyth found rifles which were filthy, rusted past use and which had not even been cleaned after firing. They were stacked against walls and sometimes left for a year with the trigger cocked.¹⁶¹ By 1875, Lieutenant Colonel Jackson of M.D. 4 found that 10%¹⁶² of the rifles in his District were unserviceable. There were two possible solutions - to place the equipment in central stores under the care of paid caretakers or to make payment of the allowances to the company commander contingent on the good condition of their stores. The former would have been expensive and both would have been politically dangerous.

89. Clothing was another problem for the Militia. All authorities were agreed that a smart uniform was the greatest attraction of the Volunteer force. The Government furnished each man with a cap, a jacket, and a pair of trousers, and a greatcoat. In 1870, Walker Powell had been sent to England to inspect the facilities of the new Army Clothing Factory in Pimlico and to arrange to buy a bulk order of clothing. He returned with the recommendation that the men be dressed in serge rather than cloth and that cloth be manufactured in Canada for greatcoats and trousers.¹⁶³ The recommendations appear to have been accepted and there was a

natural pressure to manufacture more of the clothing in Canada, thereby keeping the money in the country and broadening the basis of patronage. The chief difficulty seems to have been the inability of the military authorities to obtain any change. Clothing came under the civil branch of the Department and there was no willingness to accept recommendations. The complaints about caps and trousers have already been mentioned. They continued. The original regulations had provided for the replacement of the clothing at least every five years. Unfortunately there was no consideration of the fact that trousers wear out rather more rapidly than jackets. There continued to be no consideration when the matter was raised by Deputy Adjutants-General year after year.¹⁶⁴ Moreover, the first attempts to manufacture trousers in Canada were not uniformly successful. The cloth split across the seat without much notice, causing some embarrassment.¹⁶⁵ The serge tunics purchased by Walker Powell were not popular but neither was the first attempt to manufacture scarlet cloth in Canada. The uniforms turned black after the lightest shower.¹⁶⁷ For many years, artillery and cavalry officers pleaded that their men be issued gaiters. Otherwise, the trousers of mounted men tended to ride up their legs, causing an unsightly appearance and considerable discomfort.¹⁶⁸ There was no response. The chief complaint, however, was with the cap. It was uncomfortable, ugly and pointless in the opinion of most men and their officers. The refusal to wear it was alleged to have caused breaches of discipline. There was no evident reaction. Contracts were issued annually for the same unsuitable patterns and the men in camps continued to discard it for their old straw hats whenever their officers would allow.¹⁶⁹ Eventually, the problem could only be solved by the Militia units themselves, with the city corps leading the way. By 1876, Lieutenant Colonel Fletcher was reporting that the Montreal city regiments were buying their own shakoes,

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busbys and helmets. The Stores Department did not deign to change their design until the majority of the militia had done it for them.

90. There were more serious matters in which the Government equally refused to move. For years, there were complaints about the deteriorating conditions of the Snider rifles in the hands of the Militia. While much could have been done to keep them in better condition, there were precisely two armourers in Canada to look after them - one at Montreal and the other at Quebec. They were also responsible for looking after the artillery. Only in 1877 could Selby Smyth report that armourers had been established at Kingston and

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Toronto. In 1871, medical chests had been issued in the
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Brigade camps and in most Districts, the same chests appear to have been issued again year after year without any inspection or replacement of the contents. One surgeon in M.D. 3 reported bitterly in 1878 that he had gone through six medicine chests in attempting to make up a complete one. Such medicines as there were proved to be useless.

The pills had to be broken between stones to give them any particular virtue, having been in stock since the chests were first issued. In urgent and even dangerous cases I had no immediate means to command to treat actively excepting those furnished by myself. 173

The men were still limited to one blanket and no hospital tent was authorized. Such conditions were duplicated in most other Districts. Attempts to ensure that only fit men came to camp had solid humanitarian grounds. As a final and somewhat lighter instance of the attitude of the Government storekeepers, Lieutenant Colonel Strange reported that his detachment on St. Helen's Island had been forced to fight a fire left by some picnickers which had eventually destroyed the Government boat house. Lacking equipment of their own, the soldiers had used the fire engine in the Military Stores over the furious protests of the storekeeper who said that

they would have to obtain permission first.

91. All the faults of the Militia were not due to the penuriousness of the Treasury or the failings of the Civil Branch. The military staff, as well, was somewhat imperfect. In 1870, there were 9 Deputys Adjutant-General and 23 Brigade Majors.¹⁷⁵ The latter were each responsible for a Brigade Division and were paid on the basis of the number of efficient companies under their charge. Since they were largely the judges of what was an efficient company, the system had a certain element of imperfection. In 1870, Robertson Ross had suggested certain reservations about his officers when he had recommended a limited tenure and an examination for the appointments.¹⁷⁶ On his arrival, Selby Smyth had little praise for any of the permanent staff. The paid caretakers in the military stores and armouries were inefficient. In one case, he had inspected a store and left¹⁷⁷ the town before the caretaker had been aware of his presence. He, also, wanted a five year term for staff officers. Such a limit would force officers to remain competent. It would also make it possible to switch them around for he had found many completely entangled in local influence. In his somewhat opaque prose, Selby Smyth made it evident that many of the officers were unqualified and had been appointed only from political motives:

Officers selected for employment in such positions should by their previous service as well as by their acquirements and character, be considered fully qualified to discharge with advantage the duties of a staff officer.

It is however necessary in the interests of the service, that qualification and competency should not be kept out of view by suffering officers to be placed in such responsible positions through any local or other influence. In such an event, the officer may or may not be professionally qualified, sometimes the latter, and so his duties may be slurred over. 178

The situation was especially serious in Canada where the staff were so widely dispersed. Any official whom the General

regarded as largely superfluous was the Brigade Major. For a quarter of the year he was very busy; for the remainder, his position was a sinecure.

This I think undoubted, that too long a tenure of office, with but little to do for several month of the year, has a tendency to render most men in such positions, less careful, zealous and active minded, if not actually neglectful, than is consistent with the public service... 179

The alternative was to appoint permanent adjutants and drill sergeants to the various corps and to rename the Deputy Adjutants-General as Inspecting Field Officers. As such an officer in Ireland, Selby Smyth recalled that he had travelled 5-6000 miles a year and he could not see why Canadian staff officers could not do the same. He also wished another officer at Headquarters.

92. Since the staff was a perennial target in Parliament, Selby Smyth's report in this respect was particularly well received. The \$29,400 which was spent on the District staff was regarded as a particularly notorious extravagance. The attack was normally led by Mackenzie Bowell, a past Militia colonel, member for North Hastings and, from 1870 to 1878, Grand Master and Sovereign of the Orange Order of British America. His anger was particularly directed against the Brigade Majors and he welcomed Selby Smyth's corroboration of views which he had so long felt and expressed. ¹⁸⁰ Bowell's criticisms received attention during the year

* Bowell's indignation at the staff seems to date back to 1867. The Brigade Major in Kingston, Lieutenant Colonel David Shaw got into trouble with his Deputy Adjutant General and appealed to Bowell as both a Militia officer and a member of Parliament to intercede for him. Since Bowell was no quiet combatant, his intervention led to a considerable row with Colonel Patrick MacDougall. The result forced a cabinet intervention. A legal opinion from Alexander Campbell condemned Shaw, MacDougall and Bowell and vindicated only Jarvis. [Macdonald Papers M.G. 26 A 1 (c) 300 pt. 2 137379-137443]

of 1876 when the services of seven Brigade Majors were dispensed with shortly before the beginning of the training season.¹⁸¹ This did not at all meet the wishes of the Opposition, particularly as it was maintained that the Government had managed to preserve and promote its friends. On the other hand, many of those who had been dismissed, as was evident from their friends and spokesmen in the House, had been good Conservatives.¹⁸² At the same time, it was made clear how inadequate some of them had been. One had been long notorious for drunkenness and inefficiency and had died shortly after his removal. Another was 75 years old. The two in M.D. 6 had shared the supervision of a mere 2800 men.

93. By 1877, the staff consisted of Selby Smyth, his aide de camp, by then, his son, the Adjutant-General,¹⁸³ 12 Deputy Adjutants-General and 11 Brigade Majors. There was still under-employment, particularly among the three new Deputy Adjutant-Generals. Lieutenant Colonel Osborne Smith in M.D. 10, at Winnipeg, was at least responsible for the Manitoba Force but the remainder of his troops were very scattered indeed. In 1876, he was even authorized to hire a private detective to track down the Saint Jean-Baptiste Company.¹⁸⁴ Lieutenant Colonel John Hamilton Gray of M.D. 12 in Prince Edward Island at least had the distinction of being a Father of Confederation, but the Militia on the Island consisted of only a few hundred men. The District was only created to respect the Islanders' claim to equality in all things with the other provinces. M.D. 11 in British Columbia could at least claim a growth potential but there was very little militia in existence when Lieutenant Colonel Houghton was appointed in 1873 and very little more when he left some years later. On his arrival, he found four companies in being and a fifth being organized at Nanaimo under the drill instruction of a Gunner's Mate from the Royal Navy who had

been hired by the manager of the colliery, who also happened to be captain of the company.¹⁸⁵ By the following year, the Nanaimo company had been reduced to 2 officers and 12 men.¹⁸⁶ By 1878, Houghton had managed to create a force of an establishment of 267 but in that year only 146 could be persuaded to do drill.¹⁸⁷

ESTABLISHING A MILITARY COLLEGE

94. The Mackenzie Government was deprived by the depression, by its own viewpoint and by the inadequacy of its Ministers of Militia from doing very much for the Militia but it had one major accomplishment to its credit. In later years, whenever Canada's military effort was condemned, and it was frequently, one exception had to be made: the Royal Military College. The establishment of such an institution seems to contrary to the general tenor of the times that it remains difficult to know who it came into being. In 1870, Robertson Ross had suggested that it would be necessary to establish a staff college in Canada and that a few candidates might be sent immediately to the British staff college at Camberley as a preparation.¹⁸⁸ Nothing came of his suggestion. Again, in his Report for 1873, Walker Powell had suggested that an institution for higher military learning would be necessary to supplement the Schools of Military Instruction:

An institution at which young men could secure a superior military and scientific education would produce results alike beneficial to the Dominion and to those who join for instruction. To the Dominion it would prove a ready and economical means of providing officers whose military service could be used hereafter in the different districts, and to the cadet an education which would fit him for both civil and military duties, would give undoubted facilities for remunerative employment at all times

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Walker Powell may have been very persuasive but there were many other equally valid proposals in his Report which the Government ignored. If there is any explanation, it must be that the Prime Minister himself favoured the idea and

pushed it to fulfillment. In so doing, he was well ahead of public opinion and perhaps even ahead of the needs of the Militia. Alexander Mackenzie was interested in military affairs and had served as a militia officer on the St. Clair frontier during the Fenian Raids. He may have been particularly impressed by the amazing prestige West Point had acquired during the American Civil War when its graduates had provided the generals for both sides. It is clear that the American academy served as model for much of the Canadian college's system and, indeed, has continued to do so.

95. The Bill to establish the College was introduced in the session of 1874. It was to give a complete education in all branches of military tactics, fortification, engineering and general scientific knowledge in all subjects to qualify officers for command and staff purposes. Provision was made for a Commandant, to be paid \$3,000 and two professors at \$2,000. Admission to the College was to be by examination and candidates were required to be between 15 and 20, to submit to a medical examination and to produce evidence of good moral character. The first class was to consist of not more than 22 and thereafter the College could expand to 120, with all Military Districts being represented. The course would be for four years. The proposal received support from both sides of the House of Commons and became law on 26
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May 1874.

96. It remained to put the law into effect. Nothing more occurred in 1874 but by 1875, the buildings of the old Naval Dockyard at Kingston had been selected as the site and work had begun to alter them for their new role. After negotiations, Lieutenant Colonel Edward Hewitt of the Royal Engineers was invited to become the first Commandant. Hewitt, who had spent seven years in Canada following the Trent

Affair, had made himself well known in Militia circles. At the same time, he had some misgivings about the pay. As he explained to Mackenzie, the War Office had agreed to allow him half pay while in Canada but should it be discontinued after two years, his position would be materially altered. While he was willing to spend his private means in Canada, he had a large family and could not afford to serve at a loss. Hewitt attempted to obtain a confidential commitment from Mackenzie that the Prime Minister would support his claim for higher pay should his British pay be withdrawn.¹⁹¹ Mackenzie, somewhat stiffly, refused to give any undertakings in advance.¹⁹² Nonetheless, Hewitt did accept the post and was officially appointed Commandant on 12 November 1875, with effect from 16 September.¹⁹³ It remained to obtain the cadets. The examinations required a knowledge of arithmetic, algebra, geometry, geography, British and Canadian History, freehand drawing, English, Latin and either French or German. Further regulations required cadets to advance \$200 in their first year for their uniform, clothing, boots, books instruments and apparatus, and \$150 for each year thereafter. Board, furniture, washing and attendance would be furnished at public expense.¹⁹⁴ The first examinations were held in each District on 8 February 1876 after some delay and a relaxation of the regulations which made either French or German compulsory.¹⁹⁵ Even then, only eight candidates were successful, six of them from Ontario.¹⁹⁶ Another examination was immediately ordered for May in an attempt to fill the 22 vacancies. The first set of examinations aroused criticism in Parliament that they had been too severe and Hector Langevin tried at length to make the Minister understand how they discriminated against French speaking candidates. Vail at first could not appreciate this, as one of the problems had been that the candidates had not done well on the French

examination. Langevin pressed his point, suggesting the difficulty imposed in requiring a candidate to write French and Latin papers in English.¹⁹⁷ Although Vail tried to delude Langevin by telling him that the best candidate had come from Quebec City,^{*} he seems to have accepted the point for the regulations for the second examination allowed questions to be answered in English or French.¹⁹⁸

97. The College opened on 1 June 1876 with 18 cadets, a Commandant, two military professors and a staff adjutant, Captain Ridout, a Canadian officer in the British Army.¹⁹⁹ The budget for the first year was \$26,000,²⁰⁰ a reduction from the \$29,000 originally proposed but still very much an experiment. As at West Point, there was a considerable emphasis on engineering subjects and a cadet was prepared as much for a civil as a military career. Despite the excellent management the College received from first from its Commandant and staff, the number of applications formentry were at first disappointing.^{*} The problem, as Selby Smyth maintained, was that parents were doubtful about the future employment of sons who attended. A course fitting a young man for a career in the Canadian Militia was hardly likely prove attractive when the majority of full,time Militia officers were elderly and torpid veterans on the District staff.²⁰³

^{*} But he was Alfred George Godfry Wurtele, from the Quebec High School.

^{**} Although the number of vacancies for 1877 was reduced from 36 to 24, only 7 applicants came forward. Another special examination had to be held. [Report, 1876, xii]

98. One answer to the problem of employing the graduates was to offer them places in the civil service but there was no enthusiasm for limiting a cherished realm of patronage. Another was to seek a few Imperial commissions. This was Selby Smyth's proposal in 1877 and two years later it had been arranged. Alfred Jones was able to tell the House of Commons on 16 April 1878 that an application had been made to the British Government to discover the terms on which two or three of the cadets who graduated highest in their class might obtain Regular Army commissions.²⁰⁵ The actual request was for a commission in each branch of the British service and it was supported by Selby Smyth's comments on the progress of the cadets and of the College.²⁰⁶ The proposal was forwarded to the War Office with strong backing from the Colonial Secretary, Sir Michael Hicks Beach.²⁰⁷ The idea gained the approval of the Duke of Cambridge²⁰⁸ although the Director General of Military Education was a little sceptical about the level of instruction. There were so few Canadian cadets and they did not have the chance to experience life in a large garrison or to visit a large arsenal. However, with further training, he felt that they would be suitable for the Royal Artillery and Royal Engineers.²⁰⁹ By the summer of 1879,²¹⁰ the offer of four Imperial commissions had been negotiated. Only 15 years after the College had opened, out of 175 graduates, seventy had served or were serving in the British Army, almost half of them with the Royal Engineers.²¹¹

99. Granting Imperial commissions to the graduates was a recognition of the standing of the institution as well as an attempt to win Canadian favour. Another distinction was obtained for the College in a slightly more irregular fashion. At the request of the Commandant and with the approval of Selby Smyth and the Minister, an Order in Council was passed on 8 April 1878 that the institution would there-

after be designated the Royal Military College of Canada. While the title had certainly a more positive flavour about it than simply "Military College", the Governor General unfortunately forgot to ask for the approval of the Queen. This somewhat disturbed the British authorities ²¹² who were therefore obliged to proceed in somewhat of a state of fait accompli. Nevertheless, the approval of the Duke of Cambridge ²¹³ and the Queen ²¹⁴ were obtained to the title.

PROGRESS AND REGRESS IN TRAINING

100. However valuable the Royal Military College might become to the Militia, it was solving a problem which had yet to arise - a need for training Canadian senior officers. The real need was for schools to train junior officers and non-commissioned officers. Selby Smyth was at least partially justified in feeling that the College had been established prematurely for it impeded the establishment of more elementary and immediately necessary military institutions. The presence of the British garrison and regular training, augmented by lengthy alerts during the Fenian scares had allowed an adequate training for junior officers and non-commissioned officers but the generation which had obtained that experience passed rapidly out of the Militia. The Schools of Military Instruction which were continued after the British departure were no replacement. The cadets in most places lived at home or in lodgings ²¹⁵ and the instruction offered by the Deputy Adjutant-General and his Brigade Majors was, at best, chiefly theoretical. From the very rare references to them in their annual reports, most of the Deputy Adjutants-General do not seem to have taken them very seriously. Only the enthusiastic Lieutenant Colonel Maunsell in Fredericton regularly reported his achievements in the training of candidates and he was the only one to express regret when it was announced ²¹⁶ that a school would not be authorized in 1879. In at

least one case, a local commanding officer, Lieutenant Colonel Ibbotson, in Sherbrooke, organized his own school to qualify officers²¹⁷ but any such course was necessarily perfunctory. Above all, cadets never had the opportunity to see soldiers better trained than themselves and inevitably standards had to fall.

101. The one exception to the general deterioration was the field artillery. Their success was due to the existence of the two Gunnery Schools and to the fact that these schools were commanded by a series of very able and energetic officers. When Lieutenant Colonel French left to command the Northwest Mounted Police in 1874, he was replaced by Lieutenant Colonel D.T. Irwin, also an officer in the Royal Artillery. Some of the early officers and non-commissioned officers were also men of distinguished abilities and considerable energy and several of the other ranks rose to commissioned rank. Sergeant Major Lavie was a classical scholar and master of English prose of some distinction while another Sergeant Major took a University degree and became a professor of mathematics. Two of the original sergeants were later²¹⁸ ordained as clergymen.

102. From the first, the Schools faced difficulties. Only a small part of the establishment was permanently embodied -- the remainder were expected to serve only for a year, to be trained as gunners or as artillery officers and then to return to their parent units. However the small establishments were also expected to mount guard over their respective barracks and fortresses, look after the vast quantity of equipment under their respective charge, provide detachments to Toronto and Montreal, help instruct the Militia artillery and, periodically, turn out to fight fires and support the civil power. The latter proved a regular occur-

rence in Quebec to judge from Strange's account.²¹⁹ It was a particularly arduous life for the men, often obliged to be on guard during the night and then to be on duty during the day.²²⁰ After some experience, the Government was persuaded to permit a number of the men to re-enlist and so to enlarge the permanent cadre available for duty until most of the men were, in fact, enlisted for three years. However, until 1881, the principle persisted and both batteries remained part of the Militia.^{*} Not only the men were under a strain; the original establishment for the School had authorized only eight horses. Almost immediately, pressure began to increase the number for it was simply impossible to perform field artillery drill with so few horses, much less instruct in riding. The strain at Kingston became particularly severe after the founding of the Military College because the only way the cadets could be taught to ride was on the horses of the Battery. It was a small matter to fix but for years the appeal to increase the establishment by as few as four horses²²² or six/went unheeded.

103. Nonetheless, for all their deficiencies, the Schools existed, providing instructors, pressure and the standard to emulate which the other branches of the service lacked. There were complaints that the Schools were not sufficiently used, one hinderance, apparently, being that officers wishing to take courses were required to equip themselves with a very expensive full dress.²²³ On the other hand, even the artillery suffered from the loss of enthusiasm which pervaded the Militia as the seventies progressed and Irwin and Strange, as Commandants of the Schools and as Inspectors of Artillery regularly complained of battery commanders tolerating unqualified officers when there were²²⁴ vacancies at the Schools.

* C.f. M.G.O. (24) 21 Dec 1877.

With other ranks, it was less difficult to obtain men in a period of serious unemployment. Strange found that there were many men who were anxious to attach themselves to his battery for no pay at all.²²⁵ However, there were also criticisms that local battery commanders were willing to enlist men who were wandering out of work in their districts and to send them to the Schools as a means of providing for them. Such men were naturally unlikely to prove satisfactory and as with many before and since who have trained at Canada's expense, they were said to have made their way to the United States on their discharge.²²⁶

104. Another force for improvement in the artillery was the Dominion Artillery Association, founded in 1875 chiefly through the initiative of Colonel Strange. It was modelled on the Dominion Rifle Association which had been founded in 1869 and which, with the aid of a Government grant, had played a considerable part in fostering an interest in shooting. The objects of the Association were to develop gunnery skill and to disseminate artillery knowledge throughout the Dominion. It was governed by Council consisting of virtually all the permanent staff officers and the commanders of artillery corps which affiliated. The Governor General agreed to act as patron and the General Officer Commanding the Militia was the President with the Adjutant-General as Vice President.²²⁷ By the following year, all but two or three of the Militia artillery batteries had become members and the Association had also received a grant of \$700. The initial activity of the Association was to present badges to the most successful Artillery marksmen, thereby reducing the rather pointless waste of ammunition which had so regularly accompanied firing practice in the past.²²⁸ As the years progressed, it played a steadily growing role, arranging for teams of gunners to compete in England with British Volunteer

artillerymen and practically determining the nature of the practice which the garrison and field artillery were to fire in Canada.

105. Among many interesting artillery batteries. one has perhaps been overlooked. The Grosse Isle Garrison Battery consisted of only 24 men, the staff of the Government quarantine station in the St. Lawrence. Perhaps because their commanding officer, Captain F. Montizambert, was also their civil chief, they were said to approach the discipline of regulars. In 1877, they were inspected by the commander of the Royal Artillery at Halifax who declared that they were better than any auxiliary artillery he had seen in Britain. They easily won the Dominion Artillery Association prize for garrison artillery for the year.²²⁹ Unfortunately, by the time of their next inspection, the building containing their uniforms and equipment had burned to the ground and rather than replace them, the order was issued for the Battery to be disbanded.²³⁰

106. The success of the artillery schools convinced many that similar establishments would have a comparable value for the cavalry and infantry. Although officers and non-commissioned officers from these branches were allowed to attend the Gunnery Schools to obtain their qualifications,²³¹ there could never be sufficient numbers to make a real difference. Regularly, and with increasing urgency, local staff officers and the General Officers Commanding himself pointed out the serious lack of infantry and cavalry instructors²³² and the declining number of qualified junior officers.²³³ Since those who did qualify in the Military Schools in the Districts can have been of limited value and since most of the men in the rural battalions were soon recruits, the strain on the few qualified officers was too much and the summer camps degenerated into military picnics.

107. To cope with the problem, Selby Smyth felt that the eventual solution would be to establish schools of all arms at the present sites. However, a Government which would not buy a half dozen horses for the Gunnery Schools was unlikely to authorize a cavalry school and so he recommended in 1874 that three companies of infantry and a company of engineers should be formed. The latter would be divided between Quebec and Kingston and would be responsible for stopping the rapid deterioration of the masonry. The infantry would furnish instructors and, eventually, permanent regimental staffs for the Militia battalions. Companies would be located at Toronto, Ottawa and at some place in the Maritimes.²³⁴ Such a proposal plainly lent itself to the rhetoric about a standing army and was of course too expensive for the Government. Each year, Selby Smyth attempted to counter the rhetoric of the politicians with more of his own and his prose provided a growingly impassible barrier at the beginning of each Militia Report. In 1875, he admitted that his three small companies would be the beginning of a permanent army but that had to come in any case.²³⁵ By 1876, he was prepared to abandon the rural militia altogether, retaining only a nucleus in each county, and to spend the money on three or four infantry and cavalry schools and on the city corps. The three schools, he suggested would cost a total of \$113,250. With the appropriation for that year, they could afford to have the schools and to train 20,000 men.²³⁶ By 1877, he had come to anticipate the need to form three battalions of 500 men each although,²³⁷ as a practical recommendation, he went no further than to propose that 50 more men should be attached to each of the artillery schools to make their work in training infantry more effective.²³⁸ The problem was so urgent that he was prepared to see the Militia cut in half if only there could be a way to get them trained officers and instructors.

108. None of these proposals, of course, could be accepted by the Government. Few members supported them in the House of Commons. Alonzo Wright, the "King of the Gatineau", was one of very few who supported the idea of infantry schools and more permanent instructors.²³⁹ Most of his colleagues seem to have believed that their role would be fulfilled by urging that every possible dollar be spent on their constituents in terms of drill pay, allowances and payments to the captains of companies, and local drill sheds. Proposals to limit or do away with the rural Militia, to concentrate its stores and equipment and even to demand value for money for the allowances paid to militia officers for instruction and the care of stores, all met the head-on opposition of a rural-dominated House.

109. In the circumstances, matters were left to the militia officers themselves. Some of the more wealthy city corps paid their adjutants and instructors from regimental funds contributed by the officers. An occasional wealthy commanding officer would employ an instructor himself. One example, which came to the attention of the House of Commons, was the instructor employed by the Toronto Engineer Company. The company commander, Lieutenant Colonel Scoble, was a distinguished railway engineer and worked for the Ontario provincial government in a variety of ways. He was also an enthusiastic militiaman, having served as a staff officer during the Fenian raids.²⁴⁰ When he was planning to establish his unit in 1875, Scoble obtained the services of a Sergeant Hart who had been discharged after 21 years service in the Royal Engineers. The terms were that Hart was to receive \$300 a year, a free house and assurance of a job at \$2.00 per day. The arrangement did not work out very well. While the corps was being formed, he was employed in Scoble's office at a mere \$250 per year. He was even made to sign

a letter so that Scoble could obtain the \$200 allowed by the Government for an instructor. Deciding that he had been hoaxed, Hart resigned his job. He still remained in the Militia, however, and his troubles were not over. In January 1877, the Governor General visited Toronto and the Engineers were detailed to provide an orderly. Hart, out of work and needing the money, applied. Having been picked, he prepared his uniform with the diligence of an old soldier and waited for word. None came. In fact, Scoble had been told to call him and had forgotten. To cover his neglect, he had Hart placed under arrest and dismissed him from the Militia.

²⁴¹ What seems a little surprising is that the unfortunate sergeant had no redress for what appear to be very palpable grievances. Although there was a court of enquiry, this was more to settle the public criticism than to attack Scoble, a Canada Firster and somewhat a Liberal supporter. Under the regulations, as the Minister explained to the House of Commons, the Militia Department had no control over how the grants for instruction were spent and the fact that none of the money had gone to Hart was none of their concern. Neither was his arrest and dismissal since the discipline of other ranks was entirely under the control of commanding officers. ²⁴² As for the agreement which Hart claimed to have made with Scoble, it was a verbal undertaking and hardly enforceable in any court of law.

AID TO THE CIVIL POWER

110. Members of Parliament might question the value of a militia force and one of its functions, providing a defence against foreign enemies, was fit only for Dominion Day oratory. The other main function, however, was very real indeed. In an era when provincial police forces did not exist and city police forces were always small and sometimes inefficient, the Militia was used regularly to support the

the civil power. The Act of 1868 had made detailed provision for this service. Militia officers were obliged to call out their men when a riot or emergency occurred in their area and when they received a requisition from the local Mayor or Warden or from any two magistrates. The men became special constables without further arrangements. An important provision, explained in some detail, was that the expenses would be paid by the municipality - the officers at the Imperial rate of pay with an additional \$2.00 per day for mounted officers, the men at \$1.00 per day and \$1.00 for each horse. The municipality also had to pay for food and lodging. It was the commanding officer who was responsible for recovering the pay and the expenses from the municipality, and the rates were somewhat higher than normally paid to the Militia during training.²³⁴

111. This section was no dead letter. During the following years, militia were turned out for many small affairs as the only force local authorities could rely upon. Record of many of them has not survived but in Militia General Orders for 2 June 1871, Lieutenant Colonel David Tisdale, a future Minister of Militia, was officially thanked, with his battalion, for their part in preventing a prize fight.²⁴⁴ Election brawls were a common source of disturbance and, as the seventies grew darker, economic discontent was added to that commonest source of dispute in Canada, the battles of Catholics and Orangemen.

112. In 1873, the Militia Act was amended to make it somewhat more difficult to call out the Militia. The disturbance would have to be one which the civil authorities lacked the power to suppress. The number of men was to be up to the senior Militia officer.²⁴⁵ Nothing was done about the most serious weakness of the Act, the provision that commanding officers would be responsible for obtaining the

money for their services from the municipality. This was an obvious abuse. The commanding officer might be a poor man and unable to undertake legal action against the municipality. The municipality could easily disown decisions made by local magistrates or allow the matter to drag through the courts. However, the Act left no option to the Militia officers in turning out and it imposed serious penalties on him and his men if they failed to do so. It might be easier for a member of his corps to sue him for pay than it would be for him to collect it from the municipality. This problem was, of course, brought to the attention of the Government but there was no desire to become involved in a form of service which could never reap political dividends and which was under the constitutional responsibility of the provinces for the administration of justice. There was also a shrewd suspicion that mayors and magistrates would call for Militia more readily if they were not responsible for the cost. While this reasoning might be politically sound, it was of little help to the unfortunate militia officers responsible.^{*}

113. The 1873 amendment may have reduced the number of small, local calls on the Militia. Some still continued. In 1880, in what may have been a vintage year for the District, M.D. 1 reported three separate incidents, one to stop a riot and two to prevent prize fights which had been arranged in the United States but which were to be held in Canada.²⁴⁶ The major centres of trouble were in the major

* In 1878, Selby Smyth reported that the men called out on Cape Breton Island two years before had still not been paid. Their Captain had sued the local authorities for payment but his suit had been thrown out by the grand jury and now the members of his company were threatening to take him to court.

cities and in the coal mining areas of Nova Scotia. The long and bitter struggle of the coal miners on Cape Breton Island brought intervention by the Militia at least ten times²⁴⁷ between 1876 and 1926.

114. The Liberals were particularly troubled with disturbances during their later years in office. The 12th of July each year almost invariably threatened a riot. In 1876, the Militia were called out in Saint John New Brunswick²⁴⁸ and their presence evidently prevented disorder. On 2 October 1875, the whole of the Toronto corps were called out as a precaution during Pilgrimage Riots. Catholics had been in the custom of conducting pilgrimages between their churches in the city and the Orangemen had threatened to put a stop to them. Since many members of the Militia were enthusiastic members of the Orange Order, the strain to their discipline could have been severe but the troops were kept away from²⁴⁹ the processions and the Orangemen did not appear in force.

115. A more serious test of the Militia was the Grand Trunk Railway Strike. The company had fallen on difficult times with the depression and had imposed more severe working conditions on its employees and had laid off a good many. Finally, James Hickson, the General Manager, called for the men to accept a cut in wages. This was too much for his employees and at Belleville, they came out on strike. The Prime Minister had only just managed to get back to Ottawa from Toronto when Hickson asked him for help. Like most of the remainder of his party, Mackenzie was strongly opposed to organized labour and prepared to believe Hickson when he said that the strike had been organized from the United States. At the same time, he had to stick to his consistent principle that it would be the duty²⁵⁰ of the municipalities to restore order. This seems to have

been quite a burden for the authorities in Belleville. The walk-out had stranded a train at Belleville and the mayor was convinced that the angry railwaymen were a riot to be put down. Instead of referring to the Deputy Adjutant-General at Kingston, a few dozen miles away, who could have supplied men from the Gunnery School, he applied to the commanding officer of the local militia battalion, one of the rural corps. Since it was the evening before New Year's since some of the men of his corps were among the strikers Day, and others were sympathetic, and since only one of his companies was in Belleville, Lieutenant Colonel Brown could only gather a handful. On the next day, the situation not having improved, the mayor called on the 15th Battalion. Most of its companies were stationed in Belleville but it had not trained for two years and only 40 men could be gathered. None of the men of either battalions had greatcoats and there was no ammunition for their rifles.²⁵¹ The mayor was still not satisfied -- indeed he accused the militia somewhat inaccurately of sympathizing with the strikers -- and so he telegraphed Toronto. Having already received some warning, the Queen's Own Rifles paraded before dawn on New Year's Day, 1877, and 200 men under Lieutenant Colonel Otter set out by train for Belleville - somewhat melodramatically mounting an armed guard in the cab to watch the engineer. The train arrived to be met by an angry crowd. As the troops disembarked, they received a shower of stones and coal. Two of the militiamen were injured but the crowd was pushed out of the freight yard with some difficulty. Two of the crowd were bayoneted in the process. A detachment of the force then escorted an express train to Montreal. The intervention at Belleville ended the strike and by 3 January 1877, the men of the Queen's Own were on their way back to Toronto.²⁵²

116. With their return, the recriminations began. The Grand Trunk strike had been a severe shock to the business community. "The men had simply made up their minds

to force the Company to comply with their wishes"²⁵³ observed the Toronto Mail, and it wished to know how they had been allowed to get away with it for a full five days. The Liberal Globe blamed the Belleville magistrates²⁵⁴ but most papers took Hickson's lead and pointed to the deficiencies in the Militia.²⁵⁵ Selby Smyth took the chance, to add a postscript to his Report for 1876, pointing out that every deficiency in the force was due to Parliamentary restrictions on money for training and equipment and adding that it was remarkable that on a Sunday and a holiday it had been possible to obtain any men at all.²⁵⁶ The Queen's Own had their grievance too. In addition to spending three winter days without greatcoats or winter caps and with nothing more substantial than mufflers hastily issued on their departure,^{*} they wanted their pay. On 11 July 1877, Otter had to tell his men that although they could keep their mufflers, he had been compelled to take his claim for their pay to court and that the case would not be heard until October.²⁵⁷ Eventually, their pay was forthcoming.

117. The main excitement in maintaining the civil power was in Quebec and particularly in Montreal where racial and religious antagonism ran high. Latent bitterness was revived by the conflict surrounding the burial of the printer Joseph Guibord. When he was finally conveyed to Notre Dame des Neiges it was to the accompaniment of 1,019 men and 63 horses as well as a somewhat hostile crowd. The sole French-speaking battalion in Montreal, the 65th, seems to have been excused this ordeal.²⁵⁸ The Guibord affair was only the first of a series of demonstrations.

* It is sometimes said that the mufflers were issued later as a souvenir [Chambers, 83]. It would appear that they were issued at the time and simply retained. [R.G. 9 II A 2.3, p. 1611, 17 Jan 74].

To show their power, the Orangemen determined that on 2 July 1876, they would stage a "walk" through the city. There was bound to be a clash between them and the Irish Catholics and they were finally persuaded to cancel their plans. This only ensured that there would be even stronger determination to hold it in the following year. As 12 July 1877, excitement was even greater. As a precaution, guards were mounted on all armouries. On the night of the 10th, a sentry of the 65th at the Quebec Gate Barracks became involved in a scuffle with one of a hostile crowd which had gathered and the civilian was killed by a bayonet. Since the sentry was named Fitzpatrick and his victim, McKeown, the story may possibly be more complicated. Fitzpatrick was immediately arrested^{*} but feelings were aroused by the incident. Although cooler heads again cancelled the proposed parade on the 12th, an Orangeman named Hackett was shot in an affray on the day and immediately all available militia were called out to deter violence. Many of the men remained on duty for much of the following week until Hackett's burial on the 17th. The excitement was intense as Orangemen flocked to Montreal, determined to make the largest possible demonstration in such a largely Catholic city. The mayor refused to authorize the service of the troops, fearing the bill for their services and the men were finally turned out only on the order of four magistrates.²⁵⁸

118. 1878 proved even busier than the previous year. In early June, a strike broke out along the waterfront at Quebec. Once again, it was a protest against economic conditions which had become unbearable. Lord Dufferin, the Governor General, was at the Citadel at the time and even he was impressed by the reality of the grievances. The

* Fitzpatrick, a much smaller man than his assailant, was acquitted, praised and promoted. [Chambers, 65th, 82]

men were demanding an increase to their daily wage of 50¢. However, there were many who did not earn even that and there was not even a poor law to save them from starvation. The chief of police reported that many families which had had meat and milk four times a week a year before could now afford it only once and that in St. Sauveur, families were living on nothing beyond bean flour cakes. To go on strike was to invite strike breakers in such circumstances and violence soon broke out. There were two Militia battalions in the city but only the English-speaking 8th was reliable. The 9th Voltigeurs was largely recruited from the Lower Town dock area. Fortunately for the Governor General's peace of mind, there were the 150 men of the Gunnery School, commanded by the vigorous and thoroughly unsympathetic Colonel Strange, who had already found some release for his energies in putting down Quebec riots. In the ensuing melee, several of the crowd were shot and some of the artillerymen were wounded. The Deputy Adjutant General at Quebec immediately sent for help to Montreal and 649 were on their way within four hours. By the time they arrived, the fighting was over but they spent three more days in Quebec, suffering considerably from their lack of blankets. They were also to suffer even more from the difficulty of obtaining pay for their services for the Quebec City authorities vigorously protested the expense of Militia from outside the city.

119. In Quebec, religious peace had perhaps been preserved by the accident that the one man whom Strange's men had killed had been a Protestant. In Montreal, religious strife continued and the Militia had hardly returned from Quebec before they were involved in the plans for the third Orange attempt to celebrate 12 July with a "walk". The Prime Minister entered the struggle to persuade the Orangemen to desist. The Imperial Government warned Dufferin not to allow any Imperial troops to become

involved until the Canadians had been taught a lesson about the need for proper forces.²⁶⁴ The Canadian Government was in the unpleasant position of knowing that it could make no friends whatever happened. If it did nothing about the march, there was sure to be violence and it would become anathema in Catholic circles. If it acted vigorously, it would promptly alienate the Orange vote. Mackenzie, to his credit, chose the path of action. While trying to preserve a facade of local autonomy, Selby Smyth, who had become a Lieutenant General on 1 October 1877, was sent down to Montreal to take command of a Militia force which drew heavily on the units from the Eastern Townships and even from Quebec City. Both the Gunnery Schools were present. Altogether some 3,000 men were assembled and the city took on the aspect of an armed camp. At the same time, thousands of Orangemen also gathered, coming from Ontario, the Eastern Townships and even the United States. As the 12th approached, there were several small, violent disorders and some of the wealthier inhabitants barricaded their offices and warehouses and left for their holidays. When the 12th arrived, Selby Smyth left his Montreal battalions in the background and moved the out of town troops to the vicinity of Victoria Square²⁶⁵ where the Orangemen were gathered in a large hall. A large crowd gathered outside the hall and prepared for the collision. At 11.00 a.m., as the Orange leaders emerged, the mayor and a small party of police seized them and hurried them away. The leaderless Orangemen milled aroundⁱⁿ the hall and finally sent an angry telegram to the Prime Minister. There was no reply. Throughout the afternoon, the crowd outside waited for them to emerge. Eventually it grew tired and broke up. After dark, furious and humiliated Orangemen slipped away in twos and threes through the back streets.²⁶⁶

120. These events naturally provoked considerable discussion of the suitability of the Militia for aid to the civil

power. Selby Smyth had no doubt either about the seriousness of the situation or about the weakness of his means to deal with it. He was certainly not prone to admire members of the working class. Referring to their reluctance to enlist in the ranks of the Militia, he observed:

To expatiate to such men upon the constitution of society, and to point out the obvious truth that the main condition of a civilized community is mutual dependence, would be to no purpose. Chivalry may not inspire them, martial renown may not tempt them, patriotism even may not animate them; but, they must admit, sordid though it may seem, that their wages in civil capacities would ill bear the strain of providing such luxuries as education and medical attendance, in addition to the necessities and creature comforts of food, lodging, bedding, and physical recreation....267

He was also prey to fears which were apparently casting a long shadow before. In 1877, he warned the readers of his Report:

.... We must never lose sight of conscience and honour, nor for a moment permit the chance that Communism should with impunity make a grand experiment on the smallest portion of that collection of properties termed the British Empire. 268

Before writing his report of 1878, he had actually seen a Canadian mob and seen in it a further and powerful justification for a stronger and better Militia. There might be peace with the United States:

... But in a young and growing country disturbance to the public peace is not only possible, but very likely annually to occur from various causes in the absence of any organized force, other than the Militia, with the knowledge that we have tested over and over again, that the small police force is impotent to deal single-handed with the turbulent mob... 269

Such being the case, he recommended the establishment of three small battalions of 500 men each. Alternatively, six small battalions might be raised, three to serve in Great Britain and three in Canada. This was a notion which Selby Smyth was to develop in view of the wider crisis of a war with Russia which then confronted the British Empire. For Canada, it offered a more certain answer to the problem of internal order. In the city corps, as he had observed in his dispositions in Montreal,