

of discipline, order and dress among the Militia. Like many professional soldiers, he was perhaps excessively concerned about the appearance of his Militia but his preferences were for simple uniforms and for equipment which could be kept clean easily. Some of his reforms seem superficial - he took pains to see that military bands were provided with uniform sets of marches and calls⁵²¹ - but failure to deal with such matters of detail is often what makes a military force absurd. Luard also had a genuine concern for his officers. Although he had been responsible for uprooting his staff and redistributing them throughout the country, a policy which was extremely unpopular with many of them, - he also pleaded with the Government to improve their pay and to provide them with a pension.⁵²² It was to no avail. Luard was not the man to win the sympathy of the Government to any such expenditure, however pre-eminently just it might seem.

THE SERVICES OF MAJOR GENERAL MIDDLETON

244. Long before Luard had left the country, Caron had made up his mind on a successor.⁵²³ His choice was Colonel Frederick Dobson Middleton, an officer whose name had arisen as early as 1874 as a possibility for service in Canada. Middleton was a graduate of Sandhurst who had received his commission in 1842. He had taken part in campaigns in New Zealand, India and Burma. During the Indian Mutiny, he was twice recommended for the Victoria Cross and five times mentioned in despatches. He had graduated from the staff college and had first come to Canada in 1868 and had cemented his relations with the country by marrying Miss Eugénie Marie Doucet of Montreal in 1870. Middleton returned to England with the bulk of the garrison in the same year and in 1874, instead of coming to Canada, he had been appointed as commandant of the Royal Military College

at Sandhurst where, in 1878, he still remained.⁵²⁴

245. Caron did not immediately have his way. The advocates of a Canadian commander for the Militia concentrated their support behind Major General John Wimburn Laurie, the late Deputy Adjutant-General in British Columbia. Laurie, who was ten years younger than Middleton, had also been an officer in the British Army. While at the staff college in 1862, he had volunteered to come out to Canada and had been sent to organize the militia of Nova Scotia. He evidently chose to make his life in the province and at the time of Confederation, had joined the Militia staff, becoming first a brigade major and later becoming the Deputy Adjutant-General for M.D.9. In 1877, he had been one of those who had offered to raise a regiment in Canada to fight the Russians and in 1881, he had accompanied Roberts to South Africa on the abortive expedition against the Boers. In 1881, he had been transferred to British Columbia in Luard's grand shuffle. In 1882, he had become a major general in the British Army on whose half pay list he had remained and therefore resigned. Laurie's real influence came from his involvement in politics in his adopted province. He had been a justice of the peace since 1869, two years a warden of Halifax County and ten years the president of the Provincial Board of Agriculture.⁵²⁵

246. At the end of April, 1884, Caron raised the issue again in a lengthy letter to Macdonald. In backing Middleton, he felt that it was necessary to get an officer who had been in continuous active employment. For 22 years, Laurie had really been engaged in farming and agriculture and he would hardly be up to date in military matters. Middleton had excellent professional testimonials. Another fear was that Laurie might become a permanent fixture in the

Department instead of serving for only five years. The influence which he had brought to bear to get himself employed in the first place would obviously be exerted to keep him there. Caron still felt that the officer commanding the Militia should continue to come from the Imperial service for some years to come.⁵²⁶ The Governor General also intimated to Macdonald that if the Duke of Cambridge was asked to name an officer to replace Luard, he would choose Colonel Middleton.

247. Lansdowne's intervention at that juncture may have been a little unfortunate as it seems to have annoyed the Prime Minister that the name should be suggested in England before he had made up his mind. The issue at stake was who would nominate the short list of names for other's final selection, Lansdowne, representing the British viewpoint, naturally preferred that the Duke of Cambridge should make the suggestions and that the preferences of the Dominion Government would be respected as far as the British regulations permitted. Of course, private preferences could always be made known to the Duke and that had happened in the case of Middleton. If, however, the Privy Council put forward a name to the British authorities for their approval, Lansdowne foresaw that the Government would be exposed to canvassing and pressure on behalf of competing individuals. By keeping recommendations on an informal basis, it would also be easier for the War Office to point out its objections to particular candidates.⁵²⁷ Once again the Governor General's intervention seems to have caused offence for in the next letter he explained somewhat abashedly that "Nothing was more remote from my mind than to suggest that the Government of the day might be unequal to the duty of resisting pressure in favour as an incompetent candidate."⁵²⁸ However the Government also seems to have accepted his suggestion that the informal nomination of Middleton should be confirmed and that

the procedure should be established for all subsequent nominations.⁵²⁹

248. Middleton arrived in July. As of 12 July 1884, he assumed command of the Militia, becoming, at the same time, a Militia major general.⁵³⁰ Since all but one of the camps had been held in June, he had only a limited opportunity to inspect his force but his first report, published early in the winter of 1885, showed that he was more inclined to be satisfied than his predecessor. For a force which was to be pitched into a campaign, however, there were some notable deficiencies.

249. In 1884, only 18,070 men were allowed to drill out of a total establishment of 36,466. This was the smallest number yet and since all city corps were allowed their twelve days, it ensured that a number of rural units were unable to have even their alternate year. Although the annual expenditure had risen to \$989,498, a quarter of this amount was spent on the permanent corps.⁵³¹ In the instructions for the annual camps, inspecting officers were directed to pay great attention to the cleanliness of arms, the fitting of accoutrements, the manner in which sentries and guards were mounted and company drill. Twenty rounds of ammunition were authorized to be fired, five rounds at 200 yards, standing; ten rounds at 400 yards kneeling; and five rounds at 500 yards, in "any military position".⁵³² Since few of the men would have had any previous experience with the Snider, no very high standard of marksmanship could be expected.

250. Although the number authorized to be trained was reduced, it was still about 1,700 men larger than number actually trained during the year. There were many factors besides the low repute of the force to deter recruiting. One was the Kilmarnock cap which was issued by the Government.

While it is now popular among girl pipers and Highland dancers, in 1884: "Many good men who are willing to volunteer decline to do so when shown this cap, and to enforce its use causes much trouble and many breaches of discipline."⁵³³ To Colonel Lamontagne in M.D. 4, the cap was also a problem for the men complained that it gave them no protection from the sun. In M.D. 3, there were complaints that one blanket was not sufficient for the men and that they were obliged to sleep in their uniforms.⁵³⁴ Another evil that the men faced was drink. Colonel Denison at Niagara insisted that the few drunkards in the camp were civilians who had wandered over from Hamilton. At Camp Aldershot, there was perfect order but Colonel Taylor was troubled by "certain disreputable persons" who set out booths just outside the boundaries of the camp and "it takes many additional guards and piquets to watch these places."⁵³⁵

251. Middleton's own report gave high praise to the new Schools and anticipated great progress from their work. He announced that:

... a certain number of Officers will yearly pass through these Infantry Schools, all leaving with an improved knowledge of their duties and with their ideas enlarged, having been under Military discipline, obliged to obey orders, to be punctual and see that others were the same, and in cases where they may have been room for it, with their manners improved.⁵³⁶

He was equally impressed with the Royal Military College.

There were few institutions in Europe equal to it, he informed the Government, and none that were better.⁵³⁷

His recommendations, after his first few months included the reduction of the force so that all members of the Militia could drill for sixteen days a year, the abolition of the Kilmarnock and improved equipment and arms. He also felt that there should be more engineers.⁵³⁸ These were now inspected annually by the Professor of Engineering at the

Royal Military College, who found them to be the step children of the Militia. The Brighton Engineers were without tools. The Toronto Engineers had disappeared some years before when Colonel Scoble moved to Manitoba and the Montreal Engineers were collapsing into more and more hopeless inadequacy. It was very difficult to recruit engineers when there was no glamour but only the risk of physical work.⁵³⁹

252. The Militia remained at its weakest in the Northwest and in British Columbia. In M.D. 11, Lieutenant Colonel Holmes's little force seemed to be declining. The Nanaimo Rifles had finally ceased to exist. The New Westminster Battery was still armed with smooth bores but these were without sights and were falling to pieces. The stock of Snider ammunition had not been replaced since the first shipment. The Royal Navy had a large reserve of Martini-Henry ammunition but repeated suggestions that this type of rifle should be supplied to the West Coast were apparently ignored. Since the Indians were said to possess modern repeating rifles, there was some pardonable concern about being armed with the aging Snider. The guns which had been so hastily mounted in 1878 had, of course, not received the care that Irwin had recommended and by 1884, the carriages and slides were rotten.⁵⁴⁰

253. In M.D. 10, matters were equally bad, although 1883 had seen the formation of the 90th Rifles in Winnipeg. The only survivor of the earlier period was the Winnipeg Field Battery, which had been authorized in 1871 and a troop of cavalry which dated from 1878. A series of independent infantry companies had risen and fallen at regular intervals, usually being retained on the Militia List long after organizational life had gone out of them. There were many reasons for this state of affairs. The population of

Winnipeg was ill provided with the bourgeoisie which was the backbone of the Canadian Militia. All classes were enormously concerned with merely daily living. This was particularly true in rural areas where it proved impossible for some years to organize any stable Militia unit. At the same time, it would have helped if the independent companies had ever been allowed to train. The restricted quotas for Militia training and the provision that city corps would receive a preference meant that the Winnipeg Field Battery and the Winnipeg Troop of Cavalry were able to train annually while most of the independent companies never had a chance. Even when, as in 1881, all the companies were allowed to drill, results were not impressive. Lieutenant Colonel Houghton, who had been sent to Winnipeg from Victoria, was not the man to exercise much influence on his huge District. In that year, he reported:

All the Corps in the North-West Territories have been selected for drill, this year, but not having received any communication from them on the subject, I am unable to state what progress they are making. I learn, however, from private sources, that some, if not all of them have been performing more or less drill this season.⁵⁴¹

It was in that year that five companies had been authorized in the Northwest. It remains uncertain whether they drilled that year. They certainly did not drill in the following years and they were never supplied with uniforms. In 1884, they were all removed from the Militia List for the somewhat unfair reason that they had "become inefficient".⁵⁴² There remained only the Militia units in Winnipeg and the remnants of companies in the surrounding communities. For them, there was the further problem that their equipment and weapons dated from the Red River Expeditions of 1870 and 1871 and there was no armourer in the West to repair their rifles.⁵⁴³ The men of the Winnipeg Field Battery suffered for their fidelity for after five trainings, their uniforms were completely worn out.

254. In the summer of 1884, alarmed by reports from the Northwest and even more about Farmers' Union agitation in Manitoba, Sir John A. Macdonald asked his son, Hugh John, then in Winnipeg, for a confidential report on the military situation in the Province. It was evident from the reply that Colonel Houghton, a political appointee in the first place⁵⁴⁴ and a failure in British Columbia, was hardly the man to build up the Militia in Manitoba. With some effort to be objective, Hugh John told his father:

Colonel Houghton is getting on fairly well as Deputy Adjutant-General. He does not go on sprees and I have never seen him under the influence of liquor though I think that day in and day out he drinks more than is good for him.⁵⁴⁵

He went on to admit that he had had little chance to assess Houghton's military capacity and he did feel that he knew enough drill for his job. The Colonel would be a good fighting soldier but it was doubtful that he would be a good commander for "he has not much head and still less judgement." It was not an encouraging assessment for an officer in a crucial position. Hugh John was rather kinder about the Winnipeg Militia, reporting that the artillery battery was up to strength and disciplined, that the newly formed 90th had 262 picked men and that it would be better than most rural battalions. He also told his father that there would be no trouble getting the men to turn out against the Farmers' Union as there was no sympathy for them and thereby disarm at a single coup the whole of the Government forces.⁵⁴⁶ The problem of guarding the Winnipeg Armouries seems to have been settled by John Norquay, the Premier of the Province who appears to have ordered a guard and then sent the bill

to the Department of Militia and Defence, somewhat to its surprise and indignation.^{x547}

255. A change in the Militia Department in 1884 was assumption of responsibility for its own buildings, works and fortifications. Henry Perley had been attached to the Department since 1881 but the system of relying on the Department of Public Works still annoyed Caron. He complained of continual clashes between the two Departments and the lack of military knowledge of the Public Works engineers. There was also some suggestion that he wished a closer control of the patronage which was exercised in his own political centre of Quebec.⁵⁴⁸ He appears to have imposed his views on the Cabinet for in 1884, Sir Hector Langevin shepherded a Bill through Parliament which transferred the control, management and repair of military buildings to the Militia Department.⁵⁴⁹ It met with little opposition.⁵⁵⁰

MORE IMPERIAL COMMITMENTS

256. When Major General Charles Gordon was bottled up in Khartoum in the summer of 1884, a focus for the growing feeling of Imperialism in Great Britain had been provided. A storm of public opinion arose and forced the British Government's hand.

257. The war in the Sudan had its repercussions in Canada. Lord Wolseley, the commander of the First Red River Expedition, was selected to command the force being sent to rescue Gordon. Rejecting the shorter route from Suakin to Dongola across the desert from the Red Sea,

* As early as April, 1884, Caron had decided that it would be impossible to keep up an efficient volunteer force in Manitoba and he proposed to establish another Infantry School at Winnipeg, of the same size as in the East, at an annual cost of \$36,410. MG 26 A 1 (b) 200, 84647-49, Caron - Macdonald, 22 April 1884

Wolseley decided to take his little army up the Nile. To assist him, he decided to employ a force of Canadian voyageurs of the type which had played such a part in his journey to Manitoba. The arrangements for the force of 300 Canadians were made by the Governor General and his military secretary, Lord Melgund. Macdonald offered his support and his advice and the officers, including Major Frederick Denison of the Governor General's Body Guard, the commander, and Lieutenant Colonel Kennedy of the 90th, who later became paymaster, were all from the Canadian Militia. So were some of the men for Kennedy brought with him some members of Winnipeg militia units whose sole qualification seems to have been a wish for adventure. Eventually, 386 men left Canada on 15 September 1884. 16 of them were not to return to Canada, including Colonel Kennedy. Although there was some dispute about the value of their services, the fairest conclusion would seem to be that the majority of the men fulfilled their contracts and did a valuable job. At the same time, the men were not an official Canadian contingent. They were raised by the British Government through its agent in Canada; they were under contract to the British and their officers were paid at rates appropriate to their militia rank.^x The men were, in fact, civilians.

258. The Canadian Government was quite willing to give a little quiet assistance to British sponsored and paid undertakings like the Nile voyageurs. It was no more willing than it had been before to take any official interest in the offers of service made by militia officers at moments of Imperial crisis. The announcement that Khartoum had fallen

^x The fullest account is in C.P. Stacey, Records of the Nile Voyageurs, 1884-1885, Champlain Society, Toronto, 1959.

and that Gordon was dead produced an emotional reaction among the British at home and abroad. In Canada, it took the usual form of officers offering their services and those of their men. Major General Laurie led the way in November, 1884, and the news of Gordon's death led him to renew his offer. Lieutenant Colonel Arthur Williams and Lieutenant Colonel Osborne Smith also made well publicized offers. Altogether, there were thirty one offers listed by the Governor General's military secretary⁵⁵¹ and there were many other individual offers of services to the numerous militia commanding officers who promised their battalions. Any of these which reached either the Prime Minister or the Militia Department were promptly passed to the Governor General. The ^{Prime Minister} would not be drawn into organizing a contingent. What he was prepared to do was to revive the earlier project of raising a second battalion to the 100th Regiment, which had become the Prince of Wales Leinster Regiment (Royal Canadians). In a letter to Lord Melgund on 10 February 1885, he explained that to call out the Militia would be straining the terms of the Militia Act and also that no single battalion in the Militia could be called out as a whole and be expected to be fit for service. The answer would be to repeat the pattern by which the 100th Regiment had been raised in 1858.⁵⁵²

259. Lansdowne promptly interpreted Macdonald's somewhat tentative proposals as a firm approval, tied it ^{to} the most prominent offers of men and cabled the Colonial Secretary on 11 February 1885 that the Canadian Government had authorized recruiting in Canada, that a force should be specially enrolled with a battalion of 500 men each from the Maritimes, central Canada and the Northwest. General Laurie, who had missed getting the command of the voyageurs, would be the brigade commander and Colonel Arthur Williams would have one of the

battalions. Lord Melgung wanted to be Brigade Major. The cost would be borne by the Imperial Exchequer. This was interpreted by the British as an offer of troops. It was not as generous as ^{the} New South Wales offer for in that case the troops were in being and their cost would be borne by the colony but it did qualify Canada for the Queen's message of thanks which was sent out indiscriminately to the colonies. The failure of the British Government to take it up with any urgent enthusiasm was condemned by a growingly imperialistic press.⁵⁵³

260. To the Canadian Government, this was embarrassing and Lord Lansdowne also realized that there had been a misunderstanding and hastened to explain himself to Macdonald. It was certainly obvious to him that the Canadian Militia were neither trained nor equipped for active service and it also remained to be seen if they would accept the terms of service in any numbers.⁵⁵⁴ Only Sir Charles Tupper in London seems to have actively worked for Canadian participation but it would have been surprising if such an ardent Conservative had not been swept up in the torrent of emotion. He was embarrassed that Canada should stand second to Australia in public praise.⁵⁵⁵ To Tupper, Macdonald explained that Canada was not in the same position as Australia. The Suez Canal was not a real concern of hers neither was she anxious to use British military pressure to restrain France and Germany in the South Pacific.

Why should we waste money and men in this wretched business? England is not at war, but merely helping the Khedive to put down an insurrection, and now that Gordon is gone, the motive of aiding in the rescue of our countrymen is gone with him. Our men and money would therefore be sacrificed to get Gladstone and Co. out of the hole they have plunged themselves/into by their own imbecility.⁵⁵⁶

261. For Britain, the possibility of another expedition into the Sudan was delayed for fifteen years when a Russian force forced an Afghan garrison out of Penjdeh and the possibility of a real war between Britain and Russia suddenly became very real. For Canada, there was also a more pressing diversion. On 26 March 1885, Gabriel Dumont and his men encountered the Mounted Police detachment en route to Duck Lake and chased it home. Gordon and the Sudan were promptly forgotten. The precedent, however, remained. In earlier, as in later adventures, Macdonald had revealed that his preferred policy for imperial wars was to leave it to the British to raise what forces they wished in Canada. He would seek to gratify supporters like Williams, Laurie and Kennedy by pushing their claims with the Governor General but to Tupper, he could only refer to them with some annoyance:

The spasmodic offers of our Militia Colonels anxious for excitement or notoriety have aroused unreasonable expectations in England, & are so far unfortunate. I dare say that a Battalion [sic] or two of Venturous spirits might be enlisted but 7d. a day will cool most men's warlike ardour.⁵⁵⁷

THE NORTHWEST CAMPAIGN

262. The Northwest campaign of 1885 remains one of the few Canadian military enterprises undertaken without allies. Even then, it was not without foreign assistance. The Canadian cabinet was relieved that it had a General of Middleton's qualifications. Two other British major generals, Strange and Laurie, played prominent parts in the campaign and the only Canadian born officer to play a major independent role, Lieutenant Colonel Otter, was not a conspicuous success. The outline of operations has been given many times and the tactics have been examined and criticized in almost absurd detail. Since an enormous body of material exists on this subject alone, a complete

account would demand considerably more time and space than is available now. The major subject of the next few paragraphs will be Middleton's relations with his political superiors rather than a more rounded summary of the performance of the Canadian Militia.

263. When Middleton departed for the Northwest late in March, 1885, the Canadian Government had no very clear idea of the situation in the Territories. The General cautiously told reporters that he was going West for nothing more serious than a routine inspection of M.D. 10, and it was only on his arrival that he received news of the skirmish at Duck Lake on 26 March 1885. With that, both Middleton and the Government realized that formal military operations would be necessary.⁵⁵⁸

264. From the moment of his arrival at Winnipeg, Middleton was left with the full military responsibility for the conduct of the campaign. Both Macdonald and Caron seem to have been conscious that it was their duty to leave to their military commander all the possible local decisions and to devote themselves only to providing for his needs. Their only importunities to Middleton were to obtain his guidance as to the men, equipment and supplies which he might need. From the flood of telegrams which were sent west from Ottawa, it is easy to distinguish the respectful and solicitous messages to Middleton from the querulous and often contradictory directions to the officers and civilians responsible for supply and transport. The General was not entirely without suggestions, requests and advice. Macdonald himself, admitting his inexperience in military matters, felt that there would be no harm in submitting his "crude ideas" in dealing with the local troubles. His first principle would be to localize the conflict by

guarding the line of the C.P.R. Parties must be sent to Emerson and to other points along the border with the United States to prevent assistance from being sent to the rebels. A force should be sent to Battleford and, if possible, extended south to the railway to cut off the westward spread of the rebellion. The Prime Minister in his letter and repeatedly through messages sent by Caron recommended the services of the Mounted Police.⁵⁵⁹ While Macdonald was aware that the spring break-up would limit mobility, by suggesting that the difficulty could be overcome with mounted men, he ignored the problem of forage.

265. In Ottawa, Caron and his small remaining permanent staff had the task of improvising all the administrative support for the campaign, from the enlistment of doctors and medical orderlies to the contracting for supplies of clothing and equipment. With his natural energy, Caron threw himself personally into the work, hastening the movement of troops across the C.P.R. line to the Northwest, dealing at long range with the Hudson's Bay Company in Winnipeg and even looking after the persistent efforts of a C.H.J. Maguire of Saint John who was determined to sell his patent cypher code to the Government.⁵⁶⁰ He was particularly concerned in the services of the 9th Voltigeurs, a regiment raised from his own constituency and commanded by a fellow Conservative member of Parliament. The dangers of war were brought home to him when he was warned by his political agents in Quebec of the unpopularity of sending youngsters to such a dangerous and fatiguing campaign.⁵⁶¹ The Minister, in sum, was kept busy in his department, dealing with almost every imaginable sort of business. Even if he had the intention of directing the campaign from Ottawa, it is unlikely that he would have had the time.

266. Middleton's telegram to the Minister also reflect a certain mutual confidence. Evidently, in his nine months in Ottawa, the General had done a great deal to restore the shattered relationships of the Luard period. In his first telegram, sent while he was en route to the West, Middleton had promised the Government: "You may depend on my acting judiciously and carefully,"⁵⁶² and no subsequent historian has accused him of being rash. Caron passed on to him frightened messages from towns throughout the West which imagined themselves to be in imminent danger of massacre. "Do what can be done", was Caron's only request. Even Port Arthur,⁵⁶³ at the head of Lake Superior, demanded help but for most of them, Middleton could do very little. Caron was more insistent that Battleford be relieved until Middleton pointed out the difficulties: the continuance of an abnormally long and severe winter, the distance from the railway and his own opinion that Inspector Morris at Battleford was greatly exaggerating the danger. On 7 April 1885, Caron asked the General for his plan of campaign and he had his reply by 9 April 1885. Middleton was anxious to ease the anxiety of the Minister and to minimise the alarm and excitement which he found all about him. In Colonial tradition, this has normally led to the humiliating and disastrous downfall of the British commander but, in Middleton's case, his assurance seems to have been justified. At the same time, he was far more acutely aware of the deficiencies of his little force than were most of its members. Many of his men lacked even the rudiments of military training. The 90th Winnipeg Rifles included a large proportion of men who had never before fired a rifle. For all the confidence which Middleton sought to exude publicly, he could be forgiven some grave private misgivings.

267. The General had a right to be aggrieved about the political appointments to his force and about the continuing patronage in contracts. It certainly never occurred to Caron that the emergency of a rebellion would justify him in forgetting his friends in the awarding of contracts. The Government was obliged to rely on the Hudson's Bay Company for the bulk of its supplies: its size and extensive organization made it almost indispensable for the early success of the campaign. On the other hand, purchases in the East were still regulated by the patronage list and even in Winnipeg, anguished cries from political supporters got results. The battalion commanders included a high proportion of Conservative Members of Parliament - O'Brien, Williams, Amyot, Ouimet and Tyrwhitt were all present while the surgeons of the force were also chosen with the Conservative caucus in mind - Bergin, Orton and Roddick were all Conservative members. Lieutenant Colonel Osborne Smith was authorized to raise a battalion in Winnipeg while officers whom Middleton did not want, like Major General Laurie and Lieutenant Colonel Houghton, remained on his staff or occupied important posts at his base. In two cases, volunteers were dismissed because of their political past. Colonels Atwood and Scoble, both retired militia officers of some experience, offered their services to the hard pressed Lieutenant Colonel Jackson, then the Chief Supplies and Transport Officer in Winnipeg. Desperate for lack of staff, he accepted them. Macdonald promptly received a telegram from the Premier of Manitoba, John Norquay, declaring that the two officers were notorious organizers of the Farmers' Union and demanding their instant dismissal. Macdonald immediately passed on the order and Middleton added his own rebuke.⁵⁶⁴

268. The little battle at Fish Creek on 24 April 1885 was Middleton's first encounter with the Métis. His own dispositions had been so faulty that he felt obliged to withdraw in order to correct them. At the same time, he seems to have been a little shaken by the sharpness of the engagement and he told Caron that it had only been through chance that he had been saved from a massacre. He set up camp at Clarke's Crossing and waited for the steamers hired by the Government to reach him. Most were the property of Alexander Tilloch Galt, the son of a prominent Conservative politician and they were not particularly efficient. They were not helped by the fact that both branches of the Saskatchewan River were very low that year.⁵⁶⁵ Only on 5 May 1885 could Middleton announce that he was moving cautiously towards Batoche, the Métis stronghold. On the way, he heard that Colonel Otter, whom he had sent with 500 men to the relief of Battleford, had been involved in the unfortunate battle at Cut Knife Hill. "This is contrary to my orders to him," Middleton told the Minister.⁵⁶⁶ There was further exasperation when reinforcements failed to arrive as planned. When he complained to Ottawa that his orders were being interfered with, there was a prompt response from Caron. "Who interferes with your plans," Caron wired, "if you tell me, I will put a stop to this."⁵⁶⁷ A few days later, Middleton was embroiled in the Battle of Batoche and calling for more troops. On 11 May 1885, however, he was able to report his success. "Men behaved splendidly", he announced.⁵⁶⁸ When the capture of Riel was reported on 15 May, Caron responded with congratulations.

269. With success at Batoche, Caron for the first time began to involve Middleton in his anxieties about the cost of transport. Much of the work had been done by teams

hired through various contractors. From a number of sources, Caron discovered that these entrepreneurs were making a gigantic profit, particularly since the teams were being paid by the day rather than by the work done. Middleton had relied on his transport officer, Captain S.L. Bedson, the Warden of Stoney Mountain Penitentiary to hire the teams and the job had been done in considerable haste. Later, Caron despatched Lieutenant Colonel E.A. Whitehead of Montreal to take charge of the transport arrangements at the base and this helped to ensure a somewhat more businesslike management. From Batoche until the end of the campaign, the Minister grew more insistent in reminding Middleton of the need for an early and economical liquidation of the expedition. He particularly warned Middleton against Bedson and his colleague Bell who were "proven speculators" and to be mistrusted.⁵⁶⁹

270. It did not make Caron's task lighter that Parliament was in session throughout the campaign and those members who could not manage to make their way to the front were determined to be vigilant critics from the rear. Edward Blake warned the Government that the Snider rifle was unsatisfactory and that if it did not provide the Volunteers with the best possible weapons, he would hold them responsible. He was answered by Colonel O'Brien who said that no better rifle could be put in the hands of the Militia.⁵⁷⁰ An easy target was the failure of the Government to do anything about the Militia in the Northwest Territories, which had been allowed to collapse and which was now sorely regretted.⁵⁷¹ By the end of May, there were reports of pillaging and destruction. Francois Langelier, the able Liberal lawyer who sat for Megantic, raised reports of houses being demolished, furniture smashed and a sewing machine and a stove being broken. One man, inappropriately named Vandal, was

said to have had his clock and bedstead destroyed and that the troops had returned on the following day and burned his house.⁵⁷²

271. By June, the continuing pursuit of Big Bear was becoming more and more hopeless. Middleton was anxious by now to know who was to have the command in the Northwest. During his second delay at Clark's Crossing, he had telegraphed his suggestions for the future protection of the Territories. Since, in his view, the Mounted Police had forfeited all respect, they should be replaced by a force of 1,000 mounted infantry. The solution seemed particularly suitable since martial law must have replaced civil law. He proposed that the new force would have khaki uniforms and be armed with Winchester rifles.⁵⁷³ On June 12th, growing anxious lest officers whom he regarded as incompetent such as Laurie, Strange or Osborne Smith should obtain the command through political influence, he invited the Minister to come out to see matters for himself. He even volunteered to retain the command in the West himself, provided he was allowed a brief reunion with his family.⁵⁷⁴

272. In the end, Middleton returned with his troops. There was a brief delay in Winnipeg where a triumphal arch had been erected and the citizens wished to hold a victory parade on 16 July 1885. Colonel Amyot perhaps reflected the opinion of the force more accurately than usual when he complained that the General was detaining the troops "for a hotelkeepers' circus."⁵⁷⁵ Two days prior to the event, heavy rains began to fall and they continued steadily for five days. The grand review was cancelled and the troops were allowed to continue on their way to their homes.

273. On his return, Middleton was regarded as a hero. The fate of the Conservative ministry had hung upon the outcome of the campaign and even if the campaign had been long and expensive as well as successful, the political damage would have been great.⁵⁷⁶ As it was, to most Canadians, Middleton's campaign seemed like a distinct success. As a reward, his Major Generalcy was confirmed, he received a special gift from Parliament of \$20,000 and, in company with the Minister of Militia, he was awarded the K.C.M.G.⁵⁷⁷

274. Winding up the campaign left the problem of the Northwest only partly settled. On 13 July 85, Macdonald introduced a bill to provide land grants to the veterans of the campaign which received quick acceptance.⁵⁷⁸ All those who had served west of Port Arthur except for home guards could choose between 320 acres or \$80 in scrip before 1 August 1886.⁵⁷⁹ The terms were rather easier than those which had been applied to the Red River Expedition and the grant was double the size of the earlier allowance.⁵⁸⁰

275. Above all, the Government faced the problem of providing for the security of the Territories. Middleton's recommendation for supplanting the Northwest Mounted Police was not accepted. Instead, the Militia Act of 1883 was amended to allow for a total permanent force of 1,000 and from the increase, a new infantry school at London and a combined mounted infantry and infantry school at Winnipeg were authorized.⁵⁸¹ The Mounted Police was also doubled to a total strength of 1,000. Before the increase had been approved by Parliament, Macdonald had approached Lord Melgund, the Governor General's Military secretary, to invite him to accept the command. Melgund, who had accompanied Middleton as far as Fish Creek, had some knowledge of the West and was extremely interested in the offer. The decisive obstacle

appears to have been the reluctance of his wife to spend a number of years in Regina.⁵⁸²

YEARS OF DECAY

276. The campaign in the Northwest aroused a new interest in the Militia and in military affairs. The feeling was not lasting but the permanent force had profited to the extent of an extra two schools. When Parliament discussed the Militia in the very long session of 1885, there was a more persistent interest than usual, even with the majority of the colonels away. The question of uniform occupied more attention than usual that year, particularly when Caron admitted that to provide uniforms for the men going to the Northwest, everything in store had had to be issued. Malcolm Cameron, a Liberal from Goderich, demanded an explanation of the reports of badly made clothing, buttons falling off and unpopular caps reported the previous year by Colonel Jackson. Other Opposition members repeated reports that the Volunteers who arrived at Port Arthur had clothing in a very dilapidated condition. A Conservative member suggested that the Canadian Militia should adopt some other colour than scarlet. Not only would this allow it to be manufactured in the country, it would also be less conspicuous, and easier to keep clean. In this, Cameron agreed. The Minister replied with the conviction of an expert that scarlet was the best of colours, that anyone wearing green was a better mark at any distance than anyone wearing scarlet and his point was proven by the fact that it was the colour of the best armies in Europe. The Prime Minister, quoting from his own experience, agreed with him.⁵⁸³

277. There was a continuing attention to the campaign. Newspapermen seem to have been allowed free range in their reports and at least some of them were concerned to satisfy the religious and political prejudices of their readers. The shocking case of Private Conway occupied the emotions of the House of Commons for some time. Conway was a member of the 65th Regiment, part of a detachment which had been left in Edmonton. According to the Edmonton Bulletin, several men of the 65th had refused to march in a Corpus Christi procession because they said they were Protestants. Some of the men received extra guards and Conway, who was particularly insistent, was sentenced to eight days of bread and water in a cell. Members seem to have been reassured a few days later by a message from their colleague, Colonel Ouimet, that Conway had enlisted as a Catholic and had been locked up for insulting his captain. An attack on the Militia from another direction came from Alphonse Desjardins, a Conservative, who expanded on press reports of the misdeeds of the soldiers in Batoche. Families had been plundered and stripped, according to the reports published in the Toronto Mail, and soldiers had ripped open mattresses just for the pleasure of throwing the feathers to the wind. The people were left in a condition of skin and bones. To these charges, Caron had no equally satisfactory answer. He could only reply that Middleton had given strict orders and he was not surprised that a few panes of glass had been proven when a village had been under fire for three days. Besides, when there were such a number of men in a small place, there were bound to be a few irregularities.⁵⁸⁴

278. For the Militia, there was some delay in returning to normal. In addition to the men sent to the Northwest, several battalions had been called out as a

reserve. Two battalions, the 8th Royal Rifles and the 14th, had each provided a few companies to replace "A" and "B" Batteries respectively. The 32nd Bruce Battalion went into camp on the Saugeen for several days and, on returning, was given a generous grant by the Bruce County Council.⁵⁸⁵ In New Brunswick, a provisional battalion was formed under Colonel Maunsell, based on the men of his school and companies from other corps in the province and in Prince Edward Island.⁵⁸⁶

279. The drill for 1885-86 was not authorized until the end of July. 18,070 men were authorized to have the now customary twelve days, with city corps at local head headquarters and rural corps in most districts being assembled at brigade camps. The corps which had been called out either for service in the Northwest or to be held in the East were not to be called out.⁵⁹⁷ In some respects, active service had accentuated the deficiencies of the force. Uniforms which it had been intended to replace every three years had been obliged to last much longer simply because the appropriation for clothing would not stretch to over 12,000 new uniforms a year! The men who had been sent to the Northwest returned in tatters. Some of the clothing which was obtained was obviously unsatisfactory. M.D.3 reported that buttons fell off very quickly and the jackets provided for rifle battalions had "bad cloth and worse sewing".⁵⁸⁸ In M.D.4, the trousers issued to the cavalry tended to split. Everywhere there were complaints about the equipment and Colonel Duchesnay in M.D. 7 complained that everywhere men could be seen with black patches on their back, caused by melted tar on the knapsacks.⁵⁸⁹ In M.D. 12, which had not sent men to the campaign, Colonel Holmes managed to drill a total of 122 men in M.D.11. How could men keep up their

interest, he bitterly asked, when they were obliged to grain with obsolete guns on rotten carriages.⁵⁹⁰ The Brighton Engineers, which continued to receive high praise at its annual inspection, also continued without tools although its demand would have cost only \$150.00.⁵⁹¹

280 When the Militia returned to the East, the two artillery batteries and "C" Company of the Infantry School Corps remained to guard against any further flare-ups. The few remaining men at Kingston and Quebec had not been able to continue their courses of instruction. Only "A" and "B" Companies of the Infantry School Corps had remained in the East of all the permanent corps. Maunsell had worked hard to be sent but Colonel d'Orsonnens had taken the creditable but uncommon view that it was not up to an officer to push his career by volunteering for active service when it was a speculation on the lives of the men under him.⁵⁹² At the beginning of October, "C" Company was ordered to return and the school at Toronto was reopened. The bulk of the men of the two batteries remained until the following spring. The Governor General pressed the idea of sending a flying column through the Northwest during the spring of 1886. His concept was of a force in being, largely composed of permanent corps with a commander nominated in advance. Such a force, he felt, would impress the Indians for he believed that the day had passed when a few police could arrest an Indian in a camp.⁵⁹³ The idea seems to have been considered by the Government but the conditions in the spring of 1886, with a greatly strengthened Mounted Police, did not ^{warrent} the expedition.

281. In the excitement of 1885, two new permanent force units had been authorized but London had to wait until 1887 for its school. The Mounted Infantry School was formed

in September of 1885. It was to consist of two companies of mounted infantry, each of fifty men and twenty five horses.⁵⁹⁴ The first commanding officer was Lieutenant Colonel John B. Taylor, the elderly Deputy-Adjutant-General of M.Ds. 9 and 12. By 20 December 1885, he reported that he had recruited⁷⁵ out of his hundred men and that 52 of them had previous Regular Army or Militia service. The School was established in the old huts erected for the Manitoba Force; \$4,000 were spent on their repair.⁵⁹⁵ Middleton had his own views on the training of Mounted Infantry, some of which seem sound. He insisted that they were not cavalry, that horses were a means of moving from place to place while fighting would be done on foot. Other ideas seem less sound. "...the experience of the late campaign shows that half-breeds and Indians fighting lying down in coulees and bluffs cannot stand up against the resolute rush of white men on foot."⁵⁹⁶

282. The years from 1886 to 1890 were a period of routine and decay. The burst of energy which the Minister had shown in his earlier years in office was dissipated. The success of the Volunteers in the Northwest may have suggested that nothing could be improved. General Middleton was not of a character to be constantly importuning the Government for change. The complaints were engulfed in the annual Militia Report which few seem to have read. The criticisms which it provided of the Government's policy were not such as to appeal to the opposition. During the period, annual expenditure on the Militia ranged from \$1,178,659 in 1886 to \$1,364,779 in 1889. The small increase was largely due to the expansion of the permanent corps through the establishment of "C" Battery at Victoria, the Mounted Infantry School at Winnipeg and the new infantry school at London. Each year, somewhat less than 20,000 militia were allowed to train for twelve days. As before,

the rural battalions could expect to train every other year in a brigade camp although in some districts where there were a large number of city corps, notably in M.D. 2 and M.D. 10, the interval might be longer. The 96th Algoma Rifles were authorized in 1886 but by 1890 they had still not been drilled.⁵⁹⁷ The city corps, field batteries and some of the garrison artillery were permitted to drill annually. The field batteries were required to attend camp but the other city corps were only allowed to drill at headquarters and such field training as they could obtain could only come from sham battles on holiday week-ends. The 65th of Montreal attended camp at Three Rivers in 1888 but it was at the battalion's own expense.⁵⁹⁸

283. In or out of camp, there remains some question of the value which the men received from their training. Most of the permanent staff officers continued to express their surprise at the speed with which battalions found some sort of cohesion in the few days of actual training. The lack of instructors for the cavalry and infantry should have been overcome although, for reasons which will be suggested later, the new cavalry and infantry schools were far from satisfactory. The General was suitably concerned about improving the musketry of his force but given both the weapons and the amount of ammunition, it was doubtful that much could be accomplished. The Snider had been in the hands of the Militia for some eighteen years by 1886. It was to remain with at least some militia units for twenty years more. By this evidence alone, it must have been a remarkably robust weapon and Middleton was not the only General Officer Commanding who insisted that nothing better be given the rural militia until more satisfactory methods of storage and maintenance had been adopted. At the same time, it was worn out and generally in a bad state. Colonel Otter

in M.D. 2 reported an alarming proportion of the rifles in his district as "almost useless ... being honey combed and worn out by wear, age and bad care."⁵⁹⁹ The Government, of course, was reluctant to go to the considerable expense of rearming the Militia. Captain Greville-Harston of the 10th Royal Grenadiers had patented a system for converting the Martini-Henry into a repeating, magazine rifle and this, Middleton decided, would be the rifle for the Canadians for the future. In the meantime, he reassured the Government about its aging weapon:

I may add here in defence of the much abused Snider that the Indian Government have just armed the whole of their military police force in Burmah with the Snider, and I believe that if our present supply of Sniders are all made serviceable that the Dominion Government can well afford to continue its use until the rifle of the future is definitely decided upon.⁶⁰⁰

In the meantime, to become marksmen, the men were allotted twenty rounds a year. Middleton was successful in reducing the ranges at which it was to be fired but, by 1888, five rounds were being fired at 100 and 200 yards from the standing position, five rounds at 300 yards, kneeling and five rounds from 400 yards from any position. At these ranges, encouraging results must have been difficult to obtain and the range facilities at many camps were so limited that even this course had to be hurried through. Middleton also insisted that officers should not be allowed to fire as they have an advantage over their men and, in the field, it was not their duty to use a rifle.⁶⁰¹

284. A difficulty which many Districts faced in establishing its brigade camps was the lack of suitable ground. The selection of campsites was an annual political problem for the Government for many communities demanded attention and there were many rival claims. In return for considerable profit to local contractors and merchants,

municipalities often undertook to provide water and even electric lights but once the camp had been assigned, it often proved a little more difficult to obtain fulfillment of promises. In 1887, M.D. 4 held its camp at Rockcliffe. Ottawa had agreed to provide everything but it neglected to look after water and as there were no streams in the vicinity, there was considerable inconvenience.⁶⁰² In other parts of the country, the difficulty was to persuade towns to give ground for camps. Van Straubenzie in M.D. 5 in the same year wrote:

Year after year, I have to solicit offers from the various Corporations of Towns in the District to give me ground for a Camp and Rifle Range, begging subscriptions to put the same in order, which, to say the least, is a very unsatisfactory state of affairs.⁶⁰³

The recommendation of the staff officers was that permanent camps be developed with more satisfactory facilities but even this was only partially satisfactory. As the years passed, grounds which had seemed admirably suitable became too small. The field which had been purchased at London from Sir John Carling was already showing signs of being much too limited and the camp on Barriefield Common, near Kingston, had little space left when the men had pitched their tents.⁶⁰⁴

285. The long standing complaints about the quality of the medical supplies furnished by the Government continued throughout the period without abating. A principle medical officer was now appointed in each camp and the only box of medical supplies was put in his charge. They were sometimes of little value. At Niagara on the Lake in 1886, Dr. Strange reported angrily that he had run out of the supplies in less than a week, that the adhesive plaster was useless because of its age and there was no cotton for bandages. There were no instruments at all,

not even a pair of scissors to cut the useless plaster.⁶⁰⁵ Four years later, a future Minister of Militia, F.W. Borden, reported from the M.D. 9 camp that his chest had been, as usual, "meagrely and inefficiently supplied." He had had not a single surgical appliance - not even a tourniquet.⁶⁰⁶ The men themselves seem to have been pretty healthy although regulations continued to permit them only one blanket if the camp was in June and two if it was in September. Rubber sheets seem to have existed but they were not available. In 1889, the camp for rural corps in M.D. 5 was held at St. Johns. Since the man who had contracted to cut the grass on the camp site failed to do so and since there was a heavy rain on the first night, the men were flooded out and obliged to seek refuge in the Y.M.C.A. tent. Rubber sheets had been ordered but, according the Colonel Houghton, who was then the Deputy Adjutant-General, they had not appeared, and the men were issued straw instead.⁶⁰⁷ Another health problem was the water supply. In the following year, the M.D. 6 camp was held at St. Jean and the medical officer reported that water was distributed from a hydrant in the barracks by means of barrels spread through the camp. The water from the hydrant was muddy and it got still dirtier and warmer through sitting in the barrels.⁶⁰⁸

286. There were, of course, some improvements. The gaiters which Colonel French had recommended in his first report appear to have been authorized some eighteen years later in 1889 and artillerymen would no longer have to wear their trousers up to their knees. The artillery, in general, continued to improve substantially. The field artillery batteries were brigaded which gave a little more supervision, allowed promotion to some of the officers, and encouraged emulation. The garrison artillery, which had always been a source of disappointment, suddenly began to

win praise from the Inspector, largely because the small annual sum spent on buying rifled guns was beginning to have an effect and even more because the Artillery Association began organizing an annual meeting on the Isle d'Orleans for teams from garrison batteries. This competition, which began in 1887, had gathered representatives from 21 batteries by 1889. In that year, the field batteries began a similar competition at Kingston.⁶¹⁰ Other corps lagged behind the artillery. The Brighton Engineers and their commander, Major Vince, continued to receive annual bursts of praise but nothing was done to help them. The engineers in Montreal, after vain efforts to spread their energies into heliographs, a cyclist section and photography, seem to have lapsed into despair. The small establishment allowed the few engineer companies meant that they could do little substantial work and they were allowed no more training in camp than the Militia infantry. Repeatedly Inspectors of Engineers asked for small concessions such as working clothing and boots, working pay to compensate for hard manual labour and even a few basic tools.⁶¹¹ Nothing happened.

287. When the infantry and cavalry schools had been established, it had been hoped that they would have the considerable impact on their respective arms that the two Schools of Gunnery had had on the artillery. This did not happen. Partly, this was because of the other advantages which the artillery had always had - annual training in camps and rather more interesting work. The cavalry was notoriously the weakest arm. The few city corps could not get horses easily while the rural corps could not get properly trained. The artillery had been and remained something of an elite in the Militia with a strong esprit de corps reflected in the Dominion Artillery Association. This spirit

did not prevail in the cavalry and infantry on anything like the same basis. Commanding officers were more likely to exert themselves to buy new white helmets than to persuade some of their abler young men to become qualified at a winter course of instruction.^{*} In addition, the eighties were more prosperous than the seventies and there were far less suitable men willing to share even for three months the somewhat unappealing life of the Permanent Corps soldier. Both Otter and d'Orsonnens complained annually that they were being sent far too many men to instruct who neither intended nor could be intended to become instructors to the Militia. So many of the men who came to St. Jean were illiterate that d'Orsonnens⁶¹² started a school to help them.

288. The Cavalry School at Quebec appears to have been particularly unfortunate. It had originally been intended to divide the troop of 40 men into equal detachments at Quebec and Toronto but even 40 men proved too few to operate a viable unit. Once Caron had established the school in Quebec, he seems to have forgotten it. Three years passed before saddlery was provided and four years before they were given quarters of their own. Because the work was very heavy, men refused to re-enlist and desertion was high. This, in turn, aggravated the manpower problem. In 1886, Turnbull enlisted 19 men but 14 purchased their discharge, 3 were discharged as unfit or as bad characters and 5 deserted.⁶¹³ In 1887, there was an improvement in the

* Some counties, notably Huron and Bruce, took a paternal interest in their battalions, paying the men 25¢ a day in addition to the Government pay and buying them helmets. This was naturally a spur to efficiency.
Report, 1889, 14.

strength of the little troop, perhaps because the stables had burned down and the work may have been temporarily lighter. By the following year, however, matters were as bad as before, with only 31 men available to look after 30 horses and all the chores of the unit - servants, waiters, orderlies, clerks, and such labours as cutting wood and shovelling snow.⁶¹⁴ In 1889, after losing 14 deserters and 15 others to other causes, Turnbull wrote with evident desperation:

The sawing and splitting of firewood is an evil that cries loudly for a remedy, as most of the men who join the Cavalry come from a class who join the military profession with a view to becoming soldiers, and not labourers, and the fact of the general public watching them when at this drudgery is calculated to wound their self-respect, and cause them to dislike their profession. These may appear to be small matters, but soldiers' lives are made up of trifles.⁶¹⁵

In this atmosphere, it was unlikely that effective work could be done and the number of men attending the School declined annually.

289. The Mounted Infantry School at Winnipeg also started off in a fine flush of enthusiasm but it soon encountered many of the same difficulties which Turnbull reported. Colonel Taylor had reported proudly on the quality of men he had been able to enlist but they were no more willing than the cavalrymen of Quebec to spend their lives cutting wood and carrying coal.⁶¹⁶ Despite the repairs at the outset of the School, the buildings at Winnipeg were inadequate. The building intended as a canteen had to be used as a hospital. A lavatory and latrine were only erected in 1888 and by 1890, the greater part of the buildings, put up eighteen years before in some haste, were showing signs of decay. In these depressing circumstances, it was difficult for Taylor to hang on to his men. It was made more difficult because of the high wages on the prairies and because of the

attraction of the Northwest Mounted Police, whose lives may have been as hard but whose service was more varied and whose prospects for promotion were much greater.⁶¹⁷

290. In October, 1887, orders were issued for the formation of "C" Battery at Victoria from drafts sent from the other two permanent batteries. The men were required to re-enlist for three years from the date of their transfer and they were further prevented from purchasing a discharge within eighteen months of arriving on the West Coast. New equipment was issued to the men but, in spite of Colonel Holmes repeated urging that the rifle issued in British Columbia should be the Martini-Henry and despite the serious shortage of Snider ammunition on the coast, the men were provided with the Snider Rifle. When they arrived, regular quarters were not available for the men of the battery and they had to be quartered in the Exhibition Hall. This temporary and highly unsatisfactory arrangement continued until 1890 when the permanent barracks were finally ready. From the first, "C" Battery was unhappy. The arrival of the little force did not revive the local Militia. There were few enough to start with and, as Holmes observed, the cost of living was so high that the Militia could not afford to drill. The high costs also affected the gunners and Holmes appealed annually for an increase of at least 25% as a cost of living allowance for the officers. There was not even an allowance to pay for the men's compulsory attendance at religious service. Desertion was kept down in the first year, Holmes reported, because the men did not have too much drill to perform, but by 1890, it was necessary to send a draft to replace almost all the gunners in the battery.⁶¹⁸

291. If the permanent corps were to be effective, they had to have a high level of discipline and a high proportion of long service men. As the eighties closed, it was evident that the Schools had neither. Desertion was a heavy tax on efficiency, particularly for corps close to the American border. In 1887, d'Orsonnens could afford to be merely rueful about the problem:

Everything would have gone as nicely as possible had we not been marred by the desertion of six of my musicians during the summer who were enticed to cross the frontier to form a band.⁶¹⁹

Earlier, d'Orsonnens had been the first to draw attention to what was to become a regular problem of the permanent corps, the tendency of men to join in the fall and desert in the spring.⁶²⁰ These "snowbirds", often abetted by a kindly militia commanding officer, took advantage of a fairly arduous form of "work for relief" which was of little service to them and none at all to the Militia.

292. There were few reasons for better men to join. Accommodation ranged from unsatisfactory in Victoria's Exhibition Hall to the crumbling stone of the Citadel at Quebec or the New Fort at Toronto. The work was monotonous and heavy, with the men of the schools providing the guards, the work parties and the drill squads for successive classes of Militia officers and non-commissioned officers. When numbers were reduced by desertion or discharge, the work fell the more heavily on those who remained. Because the turn over of men was so rapid, a large proportion of the men in the permanent corps were, themselves, recruits. The pay of privates was 40¢ a day, 10¢ less than the rate for the Militia who served only part time. For the lowest rank, there was good conduct pay ranging from 3¢ to 7¢ a day for the first six years but no substantial increase was possible unless a man was promoted or could obtain one of the few