

NOTE

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CANADIAN FORCES HEADQUARTERS

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22 August 1966

The Office of the Deputy Minister in  
the Departments Responsible for  
Canadian Defence

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The Office of the Deputy Minister in the Departments  
Responsible for Canadian Defence

Personnel

1. Canada's first Deputy Minister of Militia and Defence was Major George Futvoye, who was appointed on 29 May 1868.<sup>1</sup> Although the appointment was a civil one, Major Futvoye continued to use his militia rank, and this practice was carried on by his successors: Lt.-Col. (later Colonel) C. Eugène Panet, 1875-1898; Major (later Colonel) Louis Félix Pinault, 1898-1906; and Colonel (later Major-General Sir) Eugène Fiset, 1906-1922.<sup>2</sup> Major-General Fiset's successor, Mr. G.J. Desbarats, who became Acting Deputy Minister of Militia and Defence on 1 November 1922, was the first incumbent of that office who was wholly without Service experience. He was confirmed in the appointment of Deputy Minister of National Defence on 1 April 1924 upon the expiration of Major-General Fiset's sick leave. When Mr. Desbarats retired in 1932, the practice of having a Deputy

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\* Mr. Desbarats became Deputy Minister of the Naval Service when that Department was created in 1910 and continued in that office, and later as Deputy Minister and Comptroller of the Naval Service, until the Department of National Defence was formed on 1 January 1923. For biographical details see Tucker, C.H. The Naval Service of Canada, I, 151.

Minister of military background was revived with the appointment of Lt.-Col. (later Major-General) L.R. LaFlèche.<sup>3</sup>

2. During the Second World War several Deputy Ministers appointed to the Service Departments did not have a Service background. <sup>\*</sup> When Major-General LaFlèche was granted sick leave early in September 1939, two Associate Acting Deputy Ministers were appointed in his place and both were Lt.-Cols. in the Militia. However, when an Associate Acting Deputy Minister responsible for Air Force matters was appointed in April 1940, he was without Service experience; from November 1941 the Deputy Minister responsible for naval affairs had no Service background. After Lt.-Col. DesRosiers retired in August 1945 as one of the two Deputy Ministers responsible for the Army, all three Services had civilian Deputy Ministers. When the Department was again unified in 1947, the first Deputy Minister was the same Mr. W.G. Mills who had been responsible for Naval matters after November 1941, but the next two had both held high rank in the Services (Mr. C.M. Drury as Brigadier and Mr. F. R. Miller as Air Vice-Marshal). In 1960, Mr. E.B. Armstrong succeeded Mr. Miller and still holds the post of Deputy Minister of National Defence.

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\* See Appendix "A" for details of Deputy Ministers' appointments.

The Early Deputy Ministers 1867-1904

3. From the beginning the Deputy Minister of Militia and Defence was a powerful figure in the Department by virtue of his control not only of expenditures but also of munitions, stores and fortifications. What might be termed the executive military branch of the Department was presided over by an Adjutant General until 1875<sup>4</sup> and thereafter by a General Officer Commanding the Canadian Militia, who was charged with "the military command and discipline of the Militia".<sup>5</sup> The spheres of influence of Deputy Minister and G.O.C. overlapped. In May 1897 the G.O.C., Major-General W.J. Gascoigne, appealed to the Prime Minister about a dispute involving the rifle range at Lévis in which he had been ignored by the Deputy Minister's branch.<sup>6</sup> When Major-General E.T.H. Hutton became G.O.C. in 1898, he referred in his annual report to "difficulty and friction between the Military and Civil Branches of the Militia Department" and to the "Civil Branch [having] usurped many of the functions of the Military Command. . . ."<sup>7</sup> Hutton suggested the removal of all strictly military functions from the Deputy Minister's hands, leaving him with only a "Civil (Financial) Branch" which would consist of three parts: Accounting, Contracts and Lands, and Manufacturing, this last being the Government Cartridge Factory.<sup>8</sup> The G.O.C. was particularly insistent on the need to create an Ordnance Stores Corps to look after "The custody, maintenance and issue of all warlike stores and military equipment" which were now "in the

hands of a civil department."<sup>9</sup> In his second, and last, annual report in 1899 Hutton reiterated his views, placing emphasis on the need to remove the control of ordnance stores, military engineering and military pay from the Civil Branch.<sup>10</sup>

4. Though he was himself removed as G.O.C. by the Canadian Government, Hutton's efforts to increase the powers of the military at the expense of the civil branch eventually met with considerable success. A Minute of Council of 29 October 1903 promulgated as G.O. 159, affirmed that the G.O.C. was the principal adviser to the Minister and gave him "control" over the branches of the Adjutant General, the Director General of Military Intelligence and the Military Secretary and "general supervision" over the other military branches, which now included those of the Quartermaster General, the Director General of Engineer Services, the Director General of Ordnance and the Director General of Medical Services. As for the Deputy Minister's sphere, "The Civil Branch, since the transfer therefrom of the Engineer and Store Branches, comprises the Accountant's Branch, where all matters of pay concerning the Department are handled, the Contract Branch and the Chief Clerk's Branch."<sup>11</sup>

#### The Militia Act of 1904 and the Deputy Minister

5. Within a year further changes were being contemplated which would bring about an even greater diminution in the power and influence of the Deputy Minister. The story of why and how a Militia Council was established is outside the scope of this paper,

but the effects of its creation on the office of the Deputy Minister were considerable, at least in theory. Pursuant to Paragraph 7 of the Militia Act of 1904 (ED. VII, cap. 23) which authorized the organization of a Militia Council, an Order in Council of 17 November 1904 created the new body. It consisted of:

President - the Minister  
1st Military Member - Chief of the General Staff  
2nd Military Member - Adjutant General  
3rd Military Member - Quartermaster General  
4th Military Member - Master General of the  
Ordnance  
Civil Member - the Deputy Minister  
Financial Member - the Accountant  
Secretary - the Chief Clerk<sup>12</sup>

6. The duties of all members except the Minister and the Secretary were set forth in detail. Although the Chief of the General Staff was normally the senior in rank, each of the military members was equally responsible to the Minister for his own branch. The Deputy Minister was charged with:

- (1) The interior economy of the Militia Department.
- (2) The administration of non-effective votes.\*
- (3) Parliamentary business and reports to Council.
- (4) Formal communication with other Departments of State.
- (5) The preparation of papers for submission to the Militia Council, of official reports of its proceedings, and record of the decisions taken.
- (6) The administration of contracts, in consultation with the branches specially concerned.
- (7) Arrangement for the construction of new barracks and other buildings.
- (8) The custody of militia lands not in military occupation, and purchase of land for military purposes.
- (9) Such other business as the Minister may allot to him.

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\* Non-effective votes are fixed charges which do not affect the estimates. For example, the Department might pay a certain fixed sum to a city in lieu of taxes on departmental properties in that city; this sum would be voted year by year but would not affect the main estimates.



















































