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THE CANADIAN MILITIA.

The Tory charge that the Liberal government has neglected the militia force of the country, is absolutely without foundation, and creates amusement as well as indignation in the minds of all reasonable men conversant with the facts.

It is the testimony of militia men Liberal and Tory alike, that never in its history has Canada possessed so energetic, devoted, and intelligent a minister of militia as Sir Frederick Borden, and the improvements in the force are directly the result of his policy and administration rather than the efforts of the commander-in-chief who have served under him.

Sir Frederick has had practical service in the militia from the lowest grades up, and his efforts to better the force have been incessant since he took the office eight years ago as minister. Under the Conservative regime the militia force was systematically starved and neglected. It was without modern arms, both in the artillery and infantry branches, the drill system was obsolete, and the force lacked spirit and morale, but all this has been changed under Sir Frederick Borden's administration.

One of the first changes was to hold camps of instruction for rural corps every year, instead of every other year or whenever the government did not need the money to reduce deficits, as had been the rule under the Conservative regime. Every military man appreciated the advantage of this regular training. Not only are the camps more frequent, but they are better conducted, better equipped and the drill system has been wonderfully improved.

For instance prior to 1895, the artillery had to drill with cannon of the vintage of George III—absolutely obsolete useless weapons. Since 1896 the force has been equipped with five-inch howitzers—and now we have the 4.7 rapid fire guns, absolutely the best field guns in the world, which were bought by the Dominion government recently.

Then the ancient rifles of the gas-pipe pattern have been discarded, and the troops equipped with the modern Lee-Enfield magazine rifles—as good as those used by any army.

Then shortly after Sir Frederick Borden assumed office the Army Medical Corps and Ambulance Corps were established, displacing the ancient hospital system, or rather lack of system, which previously prevailed.

Another very important reform instituted by Sir Frederick was the Army Service Corps, which attends to supplies and transport, etc., in case the militia should ever have to take the field. There was absolutely no such provision under the previous administration, and in these days of plentiful war news everybody knows that a successful transportation department is as necessary as gunpowder.

A further departure to increase the potential efficiency of the militia in case its services should be needed is the recent organization of the intelligence department. The work of this department is to supply the army staff with full information as to the natural features and resources of any part of the country should occasion arise. This data is being collected, with minute maps and every possible

information that could be needed by an army on the move.

The expenditure for the militia has been increased proportionately with other improvements since the Liberals came into power, and in all respects the service is infinitely better than it was previous to 1896.

The expenditure at Confederation amounted to \$761,000. From 1872 to 1881 it amounted to about \$1,000,000 per year. For the next ten years the expenditure was the same, about 32 cents per head of the population, but the population had increased during this time from about three and a half million to about four and three quarters millions. In 1892 the expenditure was \$1,327,459, a little less than it was in 1878. In 1895, the last year of the Conservatives, it reached \$1,639,481, or \$300,000 more than for the previous year.

In 1896, the first year of Liberal rule it was increased to \$2,113,816. In 1900 it was increased to \$3,715,193. In 1902, \$3,199,509, and the expenditure for the current year will be about \$3,900,000, so that the expenditure on the Militia today is three times greater than it was in 1894.

The charge that politics has been permitted to interfere with the efficiency of the militia is as untrue as the other charges made by Tories. The fact that a man was a Conservative has been no bar to his promotion. Indeed it has been a complaint among Liberals that the government's opponents have been given exceptional advantages in the force.

CHANGE OF FRONT.

Col. Sam Hughes, the Tory M. P., who leads the defence of Lord Dundonald, will be remembered as the persecutor of a former commander-in-chief of the Canadian militia, General Hutton, whom he hounded so long as he remained in this country.

Two years ago Col. Hughes, speaking of the men sent out to Canada to command the militia, made these observations:

"There has been a great deal of discussion throughout the press of the old country, especially as to why Canada does not get on well with her general officers commanding. If we are to judge by the verdict recorded by every one of these generals, each one found that his predecessors had been useless. Imperial officer of high standing in the old land, and he will tell you there are three types of generals sent to this country. One of these was, it seems, second in command of a certain regiment, and in order to avoid having to give him the command of that famous regiment he was shipped to Canada to get him out of the way. Another was sent because they wanted to keep him a year or two longer on the full pay list. Another was such a born crank they had no place for him in the service of the Old Country, and so they sent him out to Canada."

The man with whom Col. Hughes fell out with most thoroughly was General Hutton. That officer thought Col. Hughes had violated the militia regulations when, as lieutenant-colonel of the 45th Victoria Battalion, he offered to raise a regiment for service in South Africa, and made his offer direct to the Colonel office instead of to the General Officer Commanding in Canada. General Hutton objected. Col. Hughes moved, in the Canadian

Commons, to send a corps to the Transvaal. General Hutton called him to his office and forbade him to speak on his motion because he was a Canadian militia man, and therefore forbidden to discuss such things in public. This aroused Col. Hughes a good deal more than the Dundonald affair has, but his wrath was greater when an official communication told him:

"The Governor-General, Lord Minto, commanded Lieutenant-Col. Hughes to give his reasons in writing for committing an irregularity which reflects so seriously upon his knowledge of military affairs and the customs of His Majesty's service as offering to raise a regiment directly to the Colonial Office instead of to the General Officer Commanding in Canada."

Col. Hughes did not give Lord Minto his reasons, but he gave the House of Commons his opinion of Lord Minto and his unconstitutional conduct.

Col. Hughes said he was amazed that His Excellency should give such a command in a self-governing colony, and said he wished to enter his protest against any officer receiving a command from His Excellency unless authorized by an order-in-council.

Finally Col. Hughes' opinion of the British officers as given in a letter to General Hutton, is interesting. He said: "To the British soldier is due the victory again and again, despite the stupidity and blundering of British officers. You say I would be incapable to serve alongside British regulars. Why? Could I not retreat or surrender quickly enough to the Boers. History shows that the Yankees, whom the Canadians could always defeat, though with great odds against us, repeatedly dressed and combed down British troops led by British officers, while the old plugs of Boer farmers walloped the British though the odds were often against them."

The opinion of Col. Hughes and his Conservative associates today and his opinion when there was no political capital involved are hard to harmonize.

The Conservatives of the Eastern Townships are evidently not kicking because Mr. Fisher interfered with the plan to make the new cavalry regiment a political organization with the Baker family predominant.

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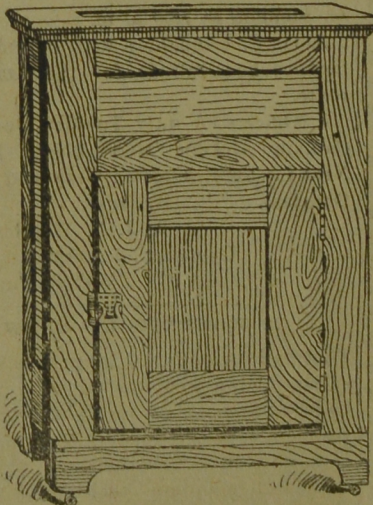
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and INCREASE IT'S GROWTH
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