

SUPPLEMENTARY RETURN

To an Address of the House of Commons, dated 18th March, 1868;
“for Copies of all Correspondence which may have taken place
between the Imperial Government and the Government of the late
Province of Canada, since February, 1863, on the subject of Colon-
ial Military Expenditure and Military Defence of the late Province
of Canada, and between the Imperial Government and that of the
Dominion, since 1st July, 1867, on the same subject.

By Command.

HECTOR. L. LANGEVIN,

Secretary of State.

DEPARTMENT OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE,
Ottawa, April 16th, 1868.

*Copy of a Report of a Committee of the Executive Council, approved by His Excellency
the Governor General, 30th October, 1862.*

The Committee of the Executive Council have had under their consideration the
Despatch of His Grace the Duke of Newcastle, of the 21st August last.

In this Despatch His Grace directs attention to the present state of the defences of this
Province, to the anxiety which is entertained by the British Government in regard to them,
and to the measures which, in His Grace's judgment, are necessary on one hand to fulfil the
expectations of Great Britain, and on the other, to place Canada in a position to meet any
emergency. His Grace alludes to the misapprehension produced in the minds of the
English people by the rejection of the Militia Bill, prepared by their predecessors, justly
remarking, however, that that proceeding on the part of the Provincial Parliament does
not afford evidence of an unwillingness to make proper provision for the defence of the
Province.

Whilst disclaiming both the right and the desire to interfere in the politics of
Canada, His Grace urges the importance of speedily resuming “measures for some
better military organization of the inhabitants of Canada, than that which now exists,”
and he proceeds to set forth certain suggestions of Her Majesty's Government in reference
to this subject. The opinions of Military authorities are appealed to to shew that any
Troops furnished by England would be unequal to the protection of Canada without the
efficient aid of its own people; and suggestions are offered in regard to the form in which
this aid may be most advantageously rendered. His Grace states that the population cap-
able of bearing arms should receive that organization and acquire that habit of discipline
which constitute the difference between a trained force and an armed mob, and that Fifty
thousand (50,000) “is the smallest number of men” which the Province should have in a
state of partial familiarity with drill and other military duty. It is recommended that one
Company of each Battalion of Sedentary Militia, or more, should be drilled every year, that
training of a large number of men may thus be gradually effected. Preparations of
this character and to this extent are calculated, His Grace remarks, to maintain and im-
prove the credit of the Province in the money markets of Europe. In conformity with

this view, His Grace expresses himself convinced of the desirableness of steps being taken to secure a basis of Provincial taxation, apart from Customs duties; and the better to secure the permanence of such an organization as His Grace proposes, he recommends "that its administration and the supply of funds for its support should be exempt from the disturbing action of ordinary politics."

The expediency of defraying the charge for the Militia, or a certain fixed portion of it, from the Consolidated Fund of Canada, or voting it for a period of three or five years, is further suggested as a means of removing the Militia question from the arena of party politics.

Another aspect of the question is presented by His Grace, namely the desirableness of uniting the defensive measures of Canada with the defensive measures of the other British Provinces on the American Continent, "that one uniform system of Militia training and organization," may be introduced into all of them. Such a scheme, it is added, must emanate from Her Majesty's Government, and the opinion of Your Excellency's Advisers is desired in relation to it: His Grace being of opinion that a union for defence may precede any political union of the North American Colonies.

The Despatch of His Grace involves matters of the highest importance, and affirms a principle which for the first time comes in a practical shape before the people of Canada. Your Excellency's Advisers have not been unmindful of the discussions upon the subject which have taken place in the Imperial Parliament; but until now they have not been called upon to consider the principles of a policy so gravely affecting the relations of Canada to the Mother Country.

The friendly spirit in which His Grace has conceived his Despatch will be cordially reciprocated by the Canadian people. The promptitude and liberality with which Her Majesty's Government provided for the protection of the Province when, on a recent occasion, danger seemed to menace it, are fully appreciated, and it is gratifying to know that the loyalty and ardor manifested by Canada in an emergency, which her people had done nothing to produce and were wholly unable to prevent, are in turn duly understood and valued by the Home Government.

It is not doubted that the same mutual regard and confidence will be exhibited in any communication or negotiation which may follow His Grace's Despatch. At the same time, however, it is felt that in dealing with a question affecting so deeply the present and future welfare of the Province care should be taken to base any arrangement that may be entered into upon something more solid than sentiment, more enduring than any proposal, not recognizing the rights and interests of the Canadian people.

Before proceeding to express an opinion upon the propositions contained in His Grace's Despatch, Your Excellency's Advisers cannot refrain from recalling the circumstances under which they assumed the responsibilities of office. Their predecessors, they cannot forget, presented to Parliament a scheme which failed to obtain the support of that body, and which, so far as can be ascertained, was extremely distasteful to the country. It failed of success not only on the ground that the method of enrolment proposed was in itself highly objectionable, but because it established a machinery cumbrous in its character, at variance with the habits and genius of the Canadian people, and entailing an expenditure far in excess of the sum which the Legislature and the people have declared themselves willing to provide. The rejection of the measure by a majority of the Legislative Assembly was the result, not of party combinations but of a deliberate conviction that its principle was unadapted to the occasion, that the more striking of its features were obnoxious to the Province, and that the financial resources available for military purposes were unequal to the outlay that would have followed the enactment of the Bill.

The Volunteer Organization, Your Excellency's Advisers were convinced, is that alone through which the military spirit of the people must find vent in a period of peace. In case of an actual emergency Your Excellency's Advisers are persuaded the response to an order calling out the Militia would be unanimous. But there is a decided aversion to compulsory service except in the presence of actual danger.

With their knowledge of the unwillingness of the people to act under a compulsory system, with the very strong and general expression of preference for the Volunteer System, which secures to them the choice of company officers, and with proofs of the growing vigor of the Volunteer Organization under circumstances of dubious encourage-

ment, Your Excellency's Advisers first entered upon the consideration of the question which had led to the defeat and resignation of their predecessors. The view entertained by Parliament, and as its Members believed, reflected in the disposition of the people, is that which commended itself to the judgment of the Executive Council. They addressed themselves to the subject therefore, anxious to lay the foundation of an efficient defensive organization, but convinced of the necessity of consulting the public will, so far as the voluntary nature of the organization is concerned, and convinced also of the necessity of so adjusting the expenditure as not to add to the embarrassments which were then and still are amongst the chief obstacles to every new enterprise originating with the Government.

In this spirit, amendments were made to the Militia Law previously in force; the aim of the new Government being to infuse vitality into the voluntary branch of the service, to encourage the formation of Volunteer Companies in rural districts, and to provide measures for the better disciplining of the force. The appropriation by Parliament for these purposes was largely in excess of the vote for the previous year, and was fully as large as the circumstances of the Province would justify a Government in asking at the hands of the Legislature except in the presence of emergencies which as yet do not exist. In 1861 the appropriation was \$84,970; in 1862, \$250,000.

Faithfully carrying out this line of policy, no time was lost in taking steps to ascertain the actual condition of the Volunteer Force, as preliminary to taking steps for its improvement.

An officer of experience and ability was intrusted with the task of inspecting and reporting upon the active companies, and his enquiry is on the point of completion. In addition, Drill Instructors have been detailed at a considerable cost to the Province for the better training of volunteers. To what extent these measures have been productive of benefit does not yet fully appear. It is known, however, that the Drill instruction has been turned to a good account, and that the visits of the officer alluded to (Colonel Wily), in connection with the more thorough drill, have stimulated the desire for further companies and for the thorough effectiveness of those already recognized. Enough is known to justify the statement that immediately after the receipt of Colonel Wily's Report, a considerable number of new companies will present themselves for the sanction of Your Excellency.

Without entering into the minute details of plans not altogether matured, the Executive Council think proper to state in reference to the continued improvement of the Force—that the Act to amend the Militia Law, provides that “the Commander in Chief may appoint Brigade Majors, not exceeding one for each Military District.” It is intended, with the least possible delay, to present to Your Excellency for approval a list of officers qualified to fill those important positions. The utmost care will be taken in the selection of individuals qualified by knowledge, experience and character for the proper discharge of the duties pertaining to the office.

These duties will include the inspection and control of such Volunteer Companies and Battalions as may be within the limits of each District, and the formation of Drill Associations to be composed of the officers and non-commissioned officers of the several Battalions of the Sedentary Militia with a view of conveying to them, to borrow the language of Your Excellency—“such a knowledge of, and proficiency in their drill and military duties as will enable them to impart from time to time the knowledge thus acquired to those who may be under their command.”

The Brigade Majors will further be instructed on assuming their duties to secure the enrolment of such quota as may be ordered from the First Class Service Men within the District, first into Companies, and whenever practicable, into Battalions under officers qualified to command them, and thus, in addition to the volunteers contemplated under the amended Act of last Session, an organization more efficient for calling out the First Class Service Men than any hitherto known may be expected.

A spirit of emulation will thus be produced which will assuredly tend to the general improvement of the Companies of the several Battalions in discipline and drill. In no other way can this result be attained in the rural districts. It is also designed to obviate one of the principal causes of dissatisfaction amongst the larger proportion of volunteers by removing the distinction hitherto maintained between classes A and B of the Volunteer Force; so that, without injustice to class A, class B may be placed in the possession of advantages until now withheld. Under the intended change the two classes will be

placed on an equality in respect of the supply of clothing which will in future be furnished to all. As the clothing has been the chief difficulty in the way of the formation of Volunteer Companies it is believed that the supplying of it by the Government, coupled with a payment in lieu of clothing to Companies already provided with uniforms, will prove in the highest degree satisfactory. Nor are the Executive Council unmindful of the reasonable claim, which, under certain circumstances, may be preferred by Volunteer Companies for the construction or acquisition of armouries, rifle ranges, and drill rooms. It is considered unwise, however, to make any general promise upon these points, or to pledge the Province to any considerable expenditure on account of them. The need really exists only in central localities, the demand of which will be duly considered and acted upon from time to time.

The importance of battalion drill is too obvious to be denied. Its enforcement must, however, be regulated by its practicability. In the cities and larger towns it may be carried on not only without additional cost, but without entailing upon the volunteers extra sacrifices or trouble. In the rural districts the case is different, with a sparse population averaging less than three inhabitants to the square mile throughout Canada, engaged in agricultural pursuits and for the most part struggling with the hardships and difficulties incident to a country in which capital is scarce, and a large portion of which remains to be reclaimed, any drill remote from the residences of the volunteers is impossible. It is not simply a question of pay, nothing is more certain than the unwillingness of volunteers so situated to absent themselves from their immediate neighbourhoods for purposes of military instruction, not merely because of their inability to dispense with pay, but because of the extent to which the absence would interfere with pursuits that cannot be interrupted without injury to themselves and loss to the country. Their farms require their unremitting attention, the scarcity of hired labour being too serious and constant to allow of absence on the part of the settlers themselves. In the event of war, no doubt these hindrances would not keep back the able-bodied population from the service of the country, but they are averse to interference, except on occasion of great necessity, and in the opinion of the Executive Council it is not desirable to excite discontent amongst them by any premature attempt to exact compulsory service.

The Battalions in the Province number four hundred and sixty-three, with officers and non-commissioned officers amounting in the aggregate to twenty-seven thousand seven hundred and eighty, or an average of sixty to each Battalion. Assuming that of these, an average of three-fourths obey the order for drill instruction in the manner already indicated, a total of twenty thousand eight hundred and thirty-five will be qualified for general drill instructors.

The argument against enforced drill as applied to the rank and file of the Militia does not bear upon the officers of the Sedentary force who now hold commissions. They at any rate, may be required to qualify themselves, and it is intended very shortly to call upon them to undergo drill in the manner already indicated, that they may be prepared at any moment to enter upon the discharge of the duties attaching to their several positions. Desiring the honor of Militia distinction they must make up their minds to prove their fitness for it; and failing to do this, the Executive Council think that there should be no hesitancy in setting them aside and replacing them with worthier men.

Your Excellency's Advisers have thus endeavoured to exhibit the policy, which in their judgment is best suited to the circumstances of the Province and the habits of its people. They point with confidence to what they have done, and what they are prepared to do as evidence of the determination to fulfil their duty in regard to the defence of the Province. They have held office less than five months and their exertions during that brief period have been neither slight nor unproductive.

Whatever differences of opinion exist here or in England as to the merits of particular parts of their scheme, at least they have proved how fully they appreciate the importance of the subject of His Grace's Despatch; and they look forward without any misgivings to the realization of results which will vindicate the wisdom, patriotism and loyalty of the course they have pursued.

Unquestionably the plan proposed is in part experimental. Everything of the kind must be so at the outset. Military tastes and aspirations have not been cherished by our people, and the attempt is now for the first time to be made to accustom them to labours

and duties other than those of peaceful life. In entering upon this task, the Government cannot too carefully consult the feelings and habits of those on whom reliance must be mainly placed in the presence of danger—the more youthful and active part of the population embraced in the Sedentary force. The question for the Government to consider is how best to accomplish this end, and time and experience are required, not only to test the sufficiency of measures now, or soon to be in operation, but to remove the prejudice with which military service is regarded and to enable those charged with the administration of affairs to ascertain the feasibility of a more extended scheme. It is possible that some further legislation may be called for to remedy defects which only experience can reveal, and Your Excellency's Advisers will be prepared to address themselves to the subject as soon as it shall come before them in a practical shape, adhering faithfully to the general principles of the policy herein set forth, but widening and modifying their action in conformity with the teaching of their present trial.

The proposal of His Grace to organize and drill not less than fifty thousand men is not now for the first time presented to the Province. The measure prepared by the late Government and rejected by the Legislature, contemplated the formation of a Force to that extent, and Your Excellency's Advisers cannot disguise their opinion that the Province is averse to the maintenance of a force which would seriously derange industry and tax its resources to a degree justifiable only in periods of imminent danger or actual war.

The people of Canada doing nothing to produce a rupture with the United States, and having no knowledge of any intention on the part of Her Majesty's Government to pursue a policy from which so dire a calamity would proceed, are unwilling to impose upon themselves extraordinary burthens. They feel, that should war occur, it will be produced by no act of theirs, and they have no inclination to do anything that may seem to foreshadow, perhaps to provoke, a state of things which would be disastrous to every interest of the Province. On this ground their Representatives in Parliament assembled, rejected the proposition to organize fifty thousand men, or indeed, to commit the Province to a much smaller force, and recent elections in various localities embracing more than one-third of the population of the Province, have shewn that in this respect public feeling has undergone no change. So far as is known, not a single Candidate has ventured to declare himself in favor of a measure so extensive as that which was prepared by the late Government, and is now again recommended by His Grace. Your Excellency's Advisers therefore find themselves fortified by public opinion. Their own estimate of what is required, and of what may most advantageously be done, is confirmed by the calm judgment of the people. His Grace recommends "a basis of taxation sounder in itself than the almost exclusive reliance on customs duties," the evident intention being, by direct taxation, to obtain an increase of income commensurate with the increase of expenditure which would follow the organization of the large force proposed.

Without entering into a discussion of the relative merits of direct and indirect taxation, Your Excellency's Advisers feel that it would not be prudent suddenly, or to any large extent, to impose direct taxation for Military purposes. This is not the occasion for adopting a principle hitherto unknown in the fiscal policy of the Province; and assuredly this is not the time for plunging into an experiment for which the people of the Province are unprepared. No more serious mistake can be committed than to conduct an argument upon the supposition that the ability of the Canadian people to sustain taxation is greater than has hitherto been acknowledged in the fiscal arrangements of the Government. The wealth of the country is in its lands. If the people are in the enjoyment of comparative wealth it is so invested as to be not readily available for the production of a large money income. Your Excellency's Advisers believe that no Government could exist that would attempt to carry out the suggestion of His Grace for the purpose designed.

The maintenance of the Provincial Credit abroad is undoubtedly an object which the administrators of the affairs of the Province should at any cost accomplish. Your Excellency's Advisers submit that their various measures demonstrate the sincerity with which they are striving to preserve the public credit unimpaired. They contend, however, that not the least important of the agencies to be employed to this end is the exhibition of a due regard to the means at the command of the Province. They hold that they are more likely to retain the confidence of European Capitalists by carefully adjusting expenditure

to income, than by embarking in schemes, however laudable in themselves, beyond the available resources of the Canadian people. That they are not unwilling to try to the utmost to comply with the suggestions of the Imperial Government is evidenced by the manner in which the projected Intercolonial Railway has been entertained. Their conduct in this matter should relieve them from every imputation. At the same time they insist that they are and must be allowed to be the best judges of the pressure which the Provincial credit can sustain. They are prepared, subject to certain conditions, to encumber this credit with liabilities arising out of the Intercolonial Railway, but they are not prepared to enter upon a lavish expenditure to build up a Military system distasteful to the Canadian people, disproportionate to Canadian resources and not called for by any circumstances of which they at present have cognizance.

Another suggestion embraced in His Grace's Despatch is well calculated to excite surprise. Your Excellency's Advisers allude to that portion of the Despatch in which His Grace proposes to remove the control of funds required for Militia purposes from the Domain of Parliament.

His Grace is evidently aware that the proposition wears the aspect of an "interference with the privileges of the Representatives of the people," and it is certain that any measure liable to this construction never will be, and ought not to be, entertained by a people inheriting the freedom guaranteed by British Institutions. The Imperial Parliament guards with jealous care the means of maintaining the Military and Naval forces of the Empire. Its appropriations are annually voted and not the most powerful Minister has dared to propose to the House of Commons the abandonment of its controlling power for a period of five years. If "the disturbing action of ordinary politics" is a reason for removing the final direction of Military preparation from Parliament, it is in every sense as applicable in England as in Canada. What the House of Commons would not, under any circumstances of danger, entertain, is not likely to be entertained by the Legislature of Canada. Whatever evils are incident to representative institutions, the people of a British Province will not forget that they are trivial in comparison with those which are inseparable from arbitrary authority. Popular liberties are only safe when the action of the people restrains and guides the policy of those who are invested with the power of directing the affairs of the country. They are safe against Military despotism wielded by a corrupt Government, only when they have in their hands the means of controlling the supplies required for the maintenance of a Military organization.

A union for defence is proposed by His Grace the Secretary of State for the Colonies. A union of the British North American Provinces for the formation and maintenance of one uniform system of Military organization and training, having a common defensive fund and approved by Her Majesty's Government. A union whose details would "emanate from the Secretary of State," and whose management would be entirely independent of the several local Legislatures.

Your Excellency's Advisers have no hesitation in expressing the opinion that any alliance of this character cannot at present be entertained. An Intercolonial Railway seems to be the first step towards any more intimate relations between the British North American Provinces than those which now exist. The construction even of this work is by no means certain. Although this Government, looking at it mainly as a means of defence, has entertained the preliminaries in common with Delegates from the Provinces of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. It is premature just now to speculate upon the possible political consequences of an undertaking which may never be consummated. Certain it is, however, that there can be no closer Intercolonial Union of any kind until increased facilities for inter-communication are provided; and equally certain that the Provinces, supposing them to be hereafter united, will never contribute to an expensive system of defence unless it be subject to their own control. Speaking for Canada, Your Excellency's Advisers are sure that this Province will continue to claim the exclusive right of directing the expenditure of the public moneys.

Your Excellency's Advisers now turn to the general principle which underlies the argument of His Grace. That the right of self-government has for a co-relative duty the maintenance of provision for defence, is a proposition which in the abstract, is indisputable; but it is only indisputable in the case of Governments of States which are Sovereign in

themselves; as between a Colony and the parent State, it cannot be said to exist in the same sense.

A British Colony must submit to all the consequences of conflict produced by the policy which Her Majesty's Government may carry out in the interest of the Empire at large. It is not enough that a Colony, endowed with self-government, provides for the preservation of peace and order within its own boundaries. It is not enough that a Colony so situated must endure all the consequences of a line of action which its own Legislators have no voice in originating and towards the termination of which they can do nothing. A further responsibility is held to attach to the Colonial relation. The Colony although the theatre of ruinous hostilities, must furnish its quota in aid of the Imperial Army and contribute a share to the attendant expenditure.

In the case of Canada the strongest advocates of the new theory of the Colonial relation are compelled to admit that an exception to the general rule must be made. Even they who demand the withdrawal of all Troops from self-governing Colonies are obliged to concede that some special allowance must be made in favor of Canada. Their reasons for an exceptional policy towards this Province are apparent; situated on the border of a vast and powerful Republic, with a frontier extending upwards of a thousand miles, with no deep back country to sustain it, and accessible in case of war at numerous points, it is admitted that Canada should be assisted to the full extent of the Imperial resources. The Despatch of His Grace seems in some measure to conflict with this view. His Grace while promising liberal assistance contends that any available supply of regular Troops would be unequal to the defence of the Province, and that "the main dependence of such a country for defence" must be upon its own people. Your Excellency's Advisers would not be faithful to their own convictions or to the trust reposed in them if they withheld an expression of their belief, that without very large assistance any efforts or sacrifices of which the people of the Province are capable would not enable them successfully and for any lengthened period to repel invasion from the neighbouring Republic. They have relied for protection in some degree upon the fact, that under no conceivable circumstances will they provoke war with the United States, and if therefore Canada should become the theatre of war resulting from Imperial Policy, while it would cheerfully put forth its strength in the defence of its soil, it would nevertheless be obliged to rely for its protection mainly upon Imperial resources. And in such an event it is their opinion that they would be justified in expecting to be assisted in the work of defence with the whole strength of the Empire.

It is not necessary at this stage of their history to put forward assurances of the readiness of the Canadian people to assume whatever responsibilities belong to them as subjects of Her Majesty. Their devotion has been exhibited too often to be open to doubt or depreciation. They have made sacrifices that should relieve them from suspicion, and which Her Majesty's Government should remember as a pledge of their fidelity. No portion of the Empire is exposed to suffering and sacrifices equal to those which would inevitably fall upon this Province in the event of war with the United States. No probable combination of regular Troops or Militia, would preserve our soil from invading armies; and no fortune which the most sanguine dare hope for would prevent our most flourishing districts from being the battle field of the war. Our trade would be brought to a standstill; our industry would be paralyzed; our richest farming lands devastated; our towns and villages destroyed; homes, happy in peace, would be rendered miserable by war, and all as the result of events for the production which Canada would be in no wise accountable.

Your Excellency's Advisers advert to these contingencies of our position, not to justify inaction but to shew the unfairness of demands predicated upon alleged selfishness and sloth on the part of Canada. They simply point to consequences which it is criminal to conceal and to dangers which it is folly to deny. So far as their own policy is concerned they are content to rely upon a fair interpretation of the measures they have adopted and others that are in contemplation.

They have reminded Your Excellency that the appropriation obtained from Parliament is as large as the state of the finances will allow it to be, and they have glanced at their plans for the purpose of proving the wisdom and justice of their course. Their anxiety is to do all that ought to be done, and to do this in a manner acceptable to the Province.

They have a right to claim, therefore, that their exertions shall be considered in the temper and the light in which they have been undertaken. Confident that time will vindicate the sagacity of their measures and the loyalty of the Canadian people, they will be happy to learn that their efforts receive the approval of Her Majesty's Government.

Whether this hope be realized or not, they are satisfied that they are acting in conformity with the wishes and interests of the people whose confidence elevated them to their present responsible position, and whose will they are bound in all cases to respect.

The Committee of the Executive Council respectfully recommend that a copy of the accompanying Memorandum be transmitted by Your Excellency to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, as containing the views of Your Excellency's Advisers on the questions discussed in His Grace's Despatch of the 21st August, 1862.

Certified.

WM. H. LEE,
C. E. C.

1st Session, 1st Parliament, 31 Vic., 1868.

SUPPLEMENTARY RETURN

To an Address of the House of Commons, dated 18th March, 1868; for Copies of all Correspondence which may have taken place between the Imperial Government and the Government of the late Province of Canada since 1863, on the subject of Colonial Military Expenditure and Military Defence of the late Province of Canada, &c., &c.

ORDERED, by the House of Commons, to be printed.

Mr. Masson (Terrebonne).

OTTAWA:

PRINTED BY HUNTER, ROSE & CO.