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COLONIAL MILITIA.

NATURE AND NUMBER OF FORCES IN THE BRITISH COLONIES.

The Local Troops From Which the Contingents For Active Service For the Empire in the Transvaal Were Drawn—The Canadian and the Antipodean Armies.

The London Times of a recent date indicates briefly the nature and the numbers of the local troops from which the contingents for active service were drawn.

In Canada, where the leader of the Opposition had given the public assurance that a proposal on the part of the Government to equip 1,250 men for service in South Africa would meet with unqualified support, the local forces consist of a body known as the Canadian militia.

This body, of which the constitution is governed by the Canadian Militia Act of 1886, is under the immediate command of a major-general of the British army. It is properly divided into three sections—namely, the permanent militia, the active militia and the reserve militia.

The first section, having a strength of only 865, remains permanently with the colors and forms the nucleus of the whole army.

The second section, or active militia, constitutes for practical purposes the available fighting force of Canada. It is 35,000 strong, but it does not remain permanently with the colors. The men receive drill and instruction in local camps and are called out once a year for training for a period which, on the showing of Major-General Hutton, in an able and interesting report published last year, is too short to satisfy the requirements of military efficiency.

The material of this army is, however, held to be excellent. The third section of the Canadian army consists of the entire male population between the ages of 18 and 60, the constitution of the Dominion permitting a general call to arms if required for the defence of the country.

The Canadian forces include 13 batteries of garrison artillery and 17 field batteries. There are also two companies

of engineers and 38 squadrons of cavalry. The admirable nature of the material of which

The Canadian Army is composed, the absence of sufficient organization and equipment, and the urgent need, for military purposes, of an adequate general staff were summarized in the following paragraph of the report of the Major-General Commanding, which has already been alluded to:

"The troops themselves are generally endowed with a profound patriotism, gifted with an excellent physique, and infused with that zeal and aptitude for military service which is an historical attribute of the Canadian people. The Canadian militia consists of a number of small units of cavalry, artillery, and infantry of varying strength and of a very varying condition of discipline and efficiency. Valuable as such a force may be in the fighting qualities of its personnel, it is useless for military purposes in the absence of a trained general staff, in the absence of administrative departments, and in the absence of an adequate supply of those stores of arms, ammunition, and equipment which are indispensable to the maintenance of an armed force intended for military operations.

The militia force of Canada is not, under the existing system, an army in its true sense; it is but a collection of military units without cohesion, without staff, and without those military departments by which an army is moved, fed, or ministered to in sickness."

This is a general criticism is not flattering to the Canadian forces as an army, but the high testimony borne by General Hutton to the quality of the troops is sufficient to affirm the general belief that any selected portion of the active militia which should be fully equipped and despatched for service with the Imperial army in the field might be counted upon to form a valuable fighting unit.

Australian Troops. In Australia, the Colonial Governments have requested the military commandants of the six colonies to forestall the results of federation by meeting together to prepare a scheme for the organization of a combined force for service with the Imperial army in South Africa.

Of the forces from which such a contingent would be drawn, Queensland, which has been most definite and helpful in its offer of assistance, deserves to be mentioned first. The total strength of the Queensland military forces on June 30, 1895, which is at present available in this country, was 2,448 men, 181 officers and 685 horses of the defence force, including volunteers, with an additional 1,794 men of the rifle clubs and police force, who are liable to be called out for military service. The Queensland forces, exclusive of the rifle clubs and police force, are divided, like the Canadian, into three sections. There is first the permanent artillery, secondly the militia, and thirdly the volunteers.

Of these, the permanent artillery, which is a very small force, is fully paid; the militia is partially paid and called out. Like the Canadian militia, for annual training, besides receiving drill and instruction during the year; the volunteers are unpaid. The permanent artillery, which is regarded as a very efficient, but underequipped and overworked, body, supplies a nucleus of training for the whole army. It is urgently recommended by the commandant of

The Queensland Forces. Major-General Howel Gunter, that this force should be increased in numbers. Financial considerations alone have hitherto prevented the increase from being made. The militia includes field and garrison artillery, mounted infantry, infantry engineers and medical staff corps. The contribution which Queensland, acting alone, proposed to make to the Imperial forces for South Africa would have consisted of 250 mounted infantry fully equipped, including horses. The splendid quality of these troops was fully recognized on the occasion of their visit to this country for the Diamond Jubilee of 1897. General Howel Gunter's last report speaks of their drill and instruction as having been specially thorough during the year, and mentions that in the returns for musketry training 100 per cent. attained the standard of efficiency.

The New South Wales forces, like those of Queensland, are divided into permanent forces, fully paid, militia partially paid, and volunteers. The permanent forces include the headquarters staff, ordnance staff, permanent staff, and, besides these, a nucleus of artillery, engineers, medical staff corps, and army service corps. The total number, including officers and men, is 591. The partially-paid forces include lancers, mounted rifles, field and garrison artillery, infantry, engineers, submarine miners, army service corps, and medical staff corps—amounting in all to 4,280. With volunteers and rifle clubs the total military force of New South Wales reaches the number of 8,937.

Victorian Forces. The Victorian forces are divided into the usual three sections. The permanent forces are composed in much the same way as those of New South Wales, and reach a total of all ranks of 393. The militia, which includes cavalry, horse artillery, field and garrison artillery, engineers, infantry, ambulance, commissariat and general staff, has a strength of 3,195. The volunteers, consisting of mounted rifles and Victorian Rangers, have a strength of 1,800, giving for the whole defensive force of Victoria a total of 5,388. In Victoria, as in New South Wales, special attention has of late been given to musketry training, and the infantry competition held at Ballarat last year was said to rival the best infantry competitions in any part of the world.

The local military force of South Australia is very small. It is divided into fixed defences and a field force. The fixed defences, which include two companies of garrison artillery for the forts erected at Glenelg and Largs Bay to protect the harbor of Adelaide, half a regiment of mounted rifles, and two companies of infantry, have a nominal total war strength of 720 men, but in time of peace the mounted rifles and infantry exist only in name, and 165 men provide for the garrison of the forts. The field force, composed of mounted rifles, artillery and infantry, has a total strength in time of peace of 1,200 men.

Western Australia has a permanent artillery force, which was enrolled in 1893, three years after the colony had attained the dignity of responsible government, and a volunteer force. The volunteer force is not paid, and the total strength of both forces combined reaches in time of peace less than 800 men.

Tasmania. In Tasmania there are fixed defences and a volunteer force. The total strength of the volunteer corps is 1,799 officers and men.

In New Zealand, where a resolution to offer a fully equipped force of mounted rifles for service in South Africa was carried almost unanimously through the Legislative Assembly, a similar division of the forces is observed. The ports of Auckland, Wellington, Lyttelton and Dunedin are strongly fortified with batteries of artillery, and defended by a complete system of submarine mines. A permanent force of artillery and engineers is maintained, numbering 250 men, and there are also local volunteers to the number of 4,117.

The combined forces of Australasia, including the volunteers, reach a total of little more than 25,000 men, and of this number only half are paid or partially paid. If we take the forces as a whole, the relative strength of the various arms is as follows: Staff and all arms not enumerated, 918; artillery, 4,193; engineers, 689; cavalry, 1,060; mounted rifles, 2,816; infantry, 15,835. It is from this body that the contingent to be sent by New Zealand and the combined colonies of Australasia will be drawn.

The entire military strength of Australasia falls, as will have been seen, considerably below that of Canada, and, unless the other colonies were prepared to contribute in the generous proportion proposed by Queensland, the Australasian contingent could not be expected to reach the figure of 1,250 men suggested for Canada. Feeling, however, runs high in Australia upon the South African question; 1,800 men are reported to have volunteered for service in New South Wales, and 1,500 in Victoria alone. It is clear that, if desired by the Imperial authorities, a colonial contingent 5,000 strong could readily be formed. The strength of the contingent offered is not, however, supremely important. Colonial assistance will be specially valued for the assurance which it carries of Imperial unity of sentiment. That the sympathy and support of Canada should be offered by the Opposition to a Ministry relying largely upon the French-Canadian vote is in itself a speaking commentary upon the situation.

SHRUBS AND TREES. The Veteran Joseph Meehan, in the Practical Farmer, Tells of Their Winter Care.

A great many trees and shrubs are lost to those interested in them because that a little knowledge of how to protect them in winter is not possessed. There are some highly prized southern trees which are winter-killed in the north because a little easily given protection is not afforded them. The value of the keeping of frost from the roots is not nearly as much appreciated as it should be. It is of the greatest benefit to the tree. Such partly tender plants as tea and Burbon roses will be "as good as new," if a sufficient covering of forest leaves to keep out frost and light be placed about them. There is hardly anything equals leaves for this purpose, a few inches keeping out severe freezing. Many large establishments having woods adjacent to their grounds send wagons to secure the fallen leaves, which are used to cover roses, rhododendron beds, strawberries and like plants. And to see these plants come from their winter covering in spring, the evergreen with foliage as perfect as when covered and all else in good condition, will repay the care taken.

In most parts of Pennsylvania raspberries are quite hardy, save that, perhaps, the green ends of the canes get a little hurt. Yet gardeners, many of them, believe it pays to bury the canes, and this they do by bending them over and covering with soil. Then, with such things as figs and flowering hydrocaneas, as figs and flowering hydrocaneas, they dig them up bodily and bury them completely under ground. In their gardens there are some things which time has proved tender, and which it is to these attention must be given in the way of protection. Many evergreens are greatly aided by having a covering of forest leaves or sawdust about them to keep out frost. There is a great call on the roots all winter, owing to freezings and drying winds above ground. The loss by transpiration is heavy on cold, clear days. If the roots are in unfrozen soil they are in much better position to supply the calls on them than otherwise. It is of great benefit to keep the sun from tender evergreens in winter. Great light makes heavy calls on the roots for moisture, much heavier than darkness does, and for this reason an evergreen free from sunlight in winter will be in far better condition in spring than one in the full glare of the sun. Shading from the sun's rays is often practicable, using evergreen boughs, perhaps.

Those who have fruit trees, and especially those who have newly planted ones, will derive the greatest benefit from placing a mulching about the roots. If forest leaves are not to be had, get loose manure or the like, anything to keep frost out. The orchard trees around which grass has grown thickly, will be better secured than those in cultivated ground, but young trees in a plot of this kind will not likely be in good condition for winter, and besides mice find the grass a favorable home in the winter season.

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LIEUTENANT-COLONEL W. D. OTTER. Commandant of the Canadian Transvaal Contingent.

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How to Fumigate a Poultry House. The poultry keeper who whitewashes his hen house four times a year need have no fear of it becoming infested with insect vermin, nor will it be necessary for him to fumigate it, as there will be no object in doing so since there will be no insect life to destroy. But the owner of a poultry house that needs fumigation should set about it in the following way: Remove all nests, perches and everything that is portable. Put a pound of sulphur in a pan with some burning coals in the middle of the house. Then close up the doors, windows, and all other openings, and let them remain so for two or three hours. Afterwards paint the roosts and nest boxes thoroughly with coal tar, and whitewash the house both inside and out with lime. A spraying pump is very useful to get the lime-wash into the crevices in the roosts and walls, and it is beneficial to add some carbolic acid to the lime-wash. Once a house is thoroughly freed from vermin it is easy to keep it so from attending to it regularly, and taking the precautionary measure of frequent lime-washing.

only the militia, and thirdly the volunteers. Of these, the permanent artillery, which is a very small force, is fully paid; the militia is partially paid and called out. Like the Canadian militia, for annual training, besides receiving drill and instruction during the year; the volunteers are unpaid. The permanent artillery, which is regarded as a very efficient, but underequipped and overworked, body, supplies a nucleus of training for the whole army. It is urgently recommended by the commandant of

The Queensland Forces. Major-General Howel Gunter, that this force should be increased in numbers. Financial considerations alone have hitherto prevented the increase from being made. The militia includes field and garrison artillery, mounted infantry, infantry engineers and medical staff corps. The contribution which Queensland, acting alone, proposed to make to the Imperial forces for South Africa would have consisted of 250 mounted infantry fully equipped, including horses. The splendid quality of these troops was fully recognized on the occasion of their visit to this country for the Diamond Jubilee of 1897. General Howel Gunter's last report speaks of their drill and instruction as having been specially thorough during the year, and mentions that in the returns for musketry training 100 per cent. attained the standard of efficiency.

The New South Wales forces, like those of Queensland