

CHAPTER X.

MILITIA AND DEFENCE.

615. Previous to the confederation of the Provinces, the defence of this country was entirely in the hands of the Imperial Government, who for that purpose maintained troops in each Province, supported by various local volunteer militia corps. This volunteer militia had, when called upon, rendered most efficient service in times of trouble, an account of which would be beyond the scope of this chapter, being, as it is, part of the history of Canada.

Defence
of Canada
before
Confede-
ration.

616. After Confederation the British Government gradually withdrew all the Imperial troops from this country, and at present only maintain a garrison at Halifax and a naval establishment there and on the Pacific Coast.

With-
drawal of
Imperial
troops.

617. By the British North America Act the Command in chief of all naval and military forces of and in Canada was vested in the Queen, and the control of the same was placed in the hands of the Dominion Parliament. A Department of Militia and Defence was at the same time established, the first Minister being Sir George E. Cartier, and the first Militia Act was passed in 1868, 31 Vic., chap. 40. This Act was subsequently amended in various ways, but is practically embodied in the present Consolidated Militia Act, 46 Vic., chap. 2, passed 25th May, 1883. By it the militia of Canada is declared to consist of all the male inhabitants of Canada of the age of 18 years or upwards and under sixty, not exempted or disqualified by law, this population being divided into four classes, as follow :—

Depart-
ment of
Militia.

The Mili-
tia Act.

Who con-
stitute the
Militia.

The first class comprises those aged 18 or upwards and under 30, being unmarried or widowers without children.