

CHAPTER XII.

MILITIA AND DEFENCE.

Lieut.-General Commanding Her Majesty's Forces, Alex. G. Montgomery Moore.
Major General in Command of Militia, Ivor Herbert, C.B.

Defence of Canada before Confederation. 952. 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 services 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.

Withdrawal of Imperial troops. 953. 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. Halifax is said to be one of the most strongly fortified places on the American continent, and an arrangement has now been made for the fortification of Esquimalt, B.C., by which the Imperial Government will construct the works, while Canada purchases the sites and contributes a fixed sum. The works will be garrisoned by Imperial troops.

Command in chief vested in Queen. Dept. of Militia. Militia Act. Who constitute the Militia. 954. 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 it 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 60, not exempted or disqualified by law, this population being divided into four classes, as follow :—

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

The second class comprises those between the ages of 30 and 45, being unmarried or widowers without children.