

THE ISSUE OF PREPAREDNESS IN THE CANADIAN ARMY,
1919 TO 1939
AS REFLECTED IN THE CAREER OF MAJOR-GENERAL
GEORGE R. PEARKES, V.C.

by

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ABSTRACT

Supervisor: Professor R. H. Roy

The issue of preparedness in the Canadian army between the First and Second World Wars has received relatively little historical attention outside the field of regimental histories. This paper endeavours to present a somewhat different aspect of the picture by approaching the subject on three interrelated levels. At what might be termed the governmental or policy level it traces the underlying reasons for Canadian neglect of the army from 1919 to 1939. At the second level, it examines the effects of the policies of the period upon military preparedness generally. Finally, it reveals how these conditions were regarded by an individual officer, the then Brevet Lieutenant-Colonel George R. Pearkes, V.C.

As a Permanent Force staff officer between the wars, George Pearkes experienced at first hand the problems involved in creating and maintaining an effective peacetime army in the face of government and public indifference and even hostility. This paper shows that Pearkes' experiences and attitudes were not unique but were reflected throughout the army as a whole. The paper also attempts to make it clear that the causes of the inter-war military unpreparedness were beyond the control of any individual or government. Among these causes were the isolationist attitude of French Canada, the strength of

pacifism after the Great War and the sense of security afforded Canadians by their country's geographical position.

It is not intended that this thesis should draw any new or radical conclusions about the subject of Canadian military preparedness from 1919 to 1939. Rather, it is intended to present new, and it is hoped, useful material on the subject in the context of information already available from other sources.

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Table of Contents

	page
I THE NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT OF CANADIAN DEFENCE POLICY, 1919 TO 1930	1
The influence of French Canada	1
The impact of the Great War	7
Imperial relations	9
Canada and the League of Nations	14
 II CANADIAN DEFENCE POLICY AND THE MILITARY	 22
Civil disorders - the returned soldiers	22
Increase in Permanent Force strength	26
Introduction of George Pearkes	27
The Canadian army in Britain	29
Pearkes' experiences at Staff College	32
Pearkes at Calgary - the peacetime army	34
Defence issues in Parliament	36
Army life at Calgary	44
 III YEARS OF HARDSHIP AND YEARS OF HOPE	 52
Weakness of the Permanent Force	52
Falling defence appropriations	53
Effects on the army of falling appropriations	57
Increased expenditures under Ralston	60
The army and public relations	65
Views of the army on defence matters	67
Pearkes and Defence Scheme No. 1	69
Pearkes and the army in Winnipeg	72
Pearkes and the army on the Pacific Coast	75
Pearkes as G.S.O. at Kingston	78

	page
IV THE CANADIAN ARMY IN THE GREAT DEPRESSION	80
Canada, the League of Nations and the Manchurian crisis	80
Canada's attitude in the Ethiopian crisis	83
Defence spending in the Depression	86
Impact of the Depression and public opinion upon the N.P.A.M.	87
Problems created by the relief camps	94
Revision of Canadian Defence Schemes	96
The reorganization of the Militia	98
The shortage of equipment	99
Military training during the Depression	100
Pearkes as Director of Military Training	102
V THE STRUGGLE TOWARDS REARMAMENT	106
Mackenzie King and appeasement	106
The issue of the "liaison letters" and Imperial defence planning	110
The beginnings of rearmament	114
Signs of growing popular support for rearmament	117
The crisis in equipment	120
Greatly increased 1938 defence spending	125
Pearkes and the preparation of Militia reorganization and mobilization plans	126
Pearkes and military training	127
The continuing need for money and support	130
Pearkes at the Imperial Defence College	132
Pearkes as G.O.C. at Calgary	135
Mobilization and War	137
VI SUMMARY	140
BIBLIOGRAPHY	145

	page
APPENDICES	152
I Militia Appropriations 1917-1939	152
II Militia Expenditures 1913-1937	154
III Paper Militia Strengths 1914-1939	155
IV Comparative National Defence Expenditures	156
V A Typical Militia Recruiting Appeal	157
VI A Typical Trade Union Resolution regarding the N.P.A.M. and Private Industry, 1930	158

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CHAPTER I

THE NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT OF
CANADIAN DEFENCE POLICY 1919 TO 1930

It would be safe to say that the Great War of 1914 to 1918 had a more profound effect on Canada than any other single event in the country's history. Domestically, the war precipitated a split between English and French Canada, the effects of which may never be erased. Externally, post-war Canadian attitudes towards the British Empire and the world were formed in reaction to both the glories and the horrors of the four-year conflict itself and to the deep schism it had caused at home. Militarily, the years between 1919 and 1939 were a time of constant struggle for preparedness in the face of public and government indifference or active hostility.

Before 1914, the ties of sentiment and of blood between English Canada and the mother country were irresistibly strong. English Canadians, who comprised the majority of the Dominion's population, basked in the reflected glory of Britain. For them, national pride was less pride in Canada than pride of membership in the greatest empire the world had seen. For them, the Great War, like the Boer War before it, was a call to arms. To the French Canadian minority, the national link with Britain was totally foreign. They could feel no pride of membership in an empire whose heritage and culture was so unlike their own. Although they were prepared to fight fiercely to defend the soil of their Canadian

homeland against direct attack, as indeed they had done in 1812, French Canadians quite understandably thought that Britain's wars overseas were not their concern.

When English Canadians enthusiastically marched off to war in 1900 and again in 1914 "for King and Country", many of them considered French Canada to be unpatriotic. Most unreasonably, they expected French Canadians to behave as British Imperialists like themselves, for they could not understand a loyalty to Canada that did not encompass a willingness to fight for Britain. The issue of defence was thus a key point of difference between French and English Canada, and to preserve some degree of national unity, a compromise was essential.

Around the turn of the 19th Century, the Liberal government of Sir Wilfrid Laurier (1896-1911) maintained a satisfactory balance between the collective imperialism desired by English Canada and the isolationism preferred by French Canadians. At the Colonial Conference of 1897, Joseph Chamberlain, the British Colonial Secretary, proposed a "great council of Empire", composed of "representative plenipotentiaries, not merely delegates" from the various colonies. He further suggested that the colonies make cash contributions toward the upkeep of the Royal Navy as the protector of all Imperial interests. A third element of his plan called for uniformity of military training and equipment as well as the training in England of colonial military units which might, if the colonies wished, "fight side by side with their British colleagues".¹

¹From Dewry, A. G. The Dominions and Diplomacy, London, 1929, Vol. 1, p. 93, 227; as quoted in R. A. MacKay and E. B. Rogers, Canada Looks Abroad, Toronto, Oxford University Press, 1938, p. 74.

Laurier, recognizing that the scheme would be undesirable to French Canada on the grounds that it could draw the country into the "vortex of European militarism",² politely but firmly rejected it.

On the other hand, Laurier yielded to pressure from English Canada to send Canadian volunteers to South Africa in 1900. He did, however, take the opportunity to make clear his policy on Canada's obligations to the Empire.

I am free to say that whilst I cannot admit that Canada should take part in all the wars of Great Britain, neither am I prepared to say that she should not take part in any war at all. I am prepared to look upon each case upon its merits as it arises. . . . I claim for Canada this, that in future, Canada shall be at liberty to act or not to act, to interfere or not to interfere, to do just as she pleases, and that she shall reserve to herself the right to judge whether or not there is cause for her to act.

While every Canadian admits that he would be ready to contribute our treasure and our blood, and the resources of Canada at the disposal of this country, for the rescue of England, were she engaged in a life and death struggle, there are many Canadians who are not³ ready to take part in the secondary wars of England.

Though recognizing Canada's moral obligation to aid the mother country in time of desperate need, Laurier thus held for a policy of no prior commitments. In keeping with this policy and to preserve Canada's freedom of action, he rejected Chamberlain's grandiloquently-phrased

²From Dewry, op. cit., p. 83, as quoted in MacKay and Rogers, op. cit., p. 75.

³Canada. House of Commons Debates, 1900, cols. 68 ff., as quoted in MacKay and Rogers, op. cit., p. 75-76.

offer of a voice in imperial policy in return for colonial contributions to imperial defence.⁴ As an alternative, he introduced the controversial Naval Service Act in 1910, which would take Canadian naval defence out of Imperial hands, placing it in the hands of the Dominion. Having already assumed in 1870 the responsibility for her own territorial defence and internal security on land, Canada by the Great War had control of all her own defence. It was understood, of course, that in both militia and navy, Canadian training was to be uniform with British, that British and Canadian officers would be exchanged for training purposes, and that in time of war units of both services might be put at the disposal of the Imperial government and possibly placed under command of senior British officers.

Laurier's government was defeated in the 1911 "Reciprocity Election" by the improbable alliance of Robert Borden's Conservative Party with Henri Bourassa's French Canadian Nationalists. Borden and

⁴In the Report of the Colonial Conference, 1902, Chamberlain is quoted as saying:

Gentlemen, we do want your aid. We do require your assistance in the administration of the vast Empire which is yours as well as ours. The weary Titan staggers under the too vast orb of its fate. We have borne the burden for many years. We think that it is time that our children should assist us to support it, and whenever you make the request to us, be very sure that we shall hasten gladly to call you to our councils. If you are prepared at any time to take any share or any proportionate share in the burdens of Empire, we are prepared to meet you with any proposal for giving to you a corresponding voice in the policy of the Empire.

MacKay and Rogers, op. cit., p. 77.

his party were anxious to enlarge Canadian autonomy, as Laurier had been, but they also sought to perpetuate a unitary Imperial policy through consultation and planning among all the Dominions and Britain in partnership. This latter goal, laudable to English Canadians, was naturally disagreeable to French Canada, and the coming of war in 1914 did nothing to improve relations between the two ethnic groups. As the Great War swallowed up more and more of Canada's manpower, English Canadians demanded that equal sacrifices should be made by all and hence that conscription should be introduced across the country. Sir Wilfrid Laurier, whose Liberal opposition held most of the French Canadian seats in Parliament, faced a dilemma in the crucial elections of 1917. Support for conscription might win him the election on English Canadian votes, but it would be a betrayal of his own French Canadian people that would drive them from the only national political party with which they could identify. On the other hand, opposition to conscription would retain the loyalty of French Canada but would lose for Laurier the election as well as the support of many English Canadian Liberals who insisted that conscription was a national necessity. Either course would deeply divide the country, but Laurier chose the second alternative in the belief that a Quebec-centered Liberal Party could in time effect a reconciliation of French Canada with the rest of the nation.

Inevitably, the Liberal Party disintegrated. Many English Canadian Liberals joined Borden's Conservatives in a Unionist Party, the platform of which was based unashamedly on forcing conscription

upon French Canada. After December 17, 1917, in a House of 235 seats, Laurier had only 82 supporters, 62 of whom were from Quebec. In April 1918, grim evidence of the seriousness of the conscription crisis appeared in the form of bloody clashes between French Canadian civilians and English Canadian soldiers in Quebec City.⁵

The events of 1917 and 1918 in Canada contained clear political lessons for those who had eyes to see. As Bruce Hutchison has summed up:

By hanging Louis Riel, a French Canadian half-breed, the Macdonald Government handed Conservative Quebec into the Liberal Party's custody. By invoking conscription, Borden confirmed the transfer. From Riel and conscription the Conservative Party has never recovered to this day, since no party can long govern Canada without at least substantial support in Quebec--a fact discovered by Macdonald and bitterly relearned by all his successors.

Laurier had thus planted a time bomb in the enemy's camp. He had handed to the next Liberal leader the first essential base of political warfare.⁶

Laurier's successor, William Lyon Mackenzie King, never forgot these lessons. He realized that all he had to do to ensure 50 to 60 Liberal seats from Quebec was constantly to demonstrate to French Canada that his party opposed commitments which might lead to Canadian military involvement overseas. With the Quebec bloc in his pocket, King was already almost half way toward success in any general election, a fact

⁵ A first hand description of the Quebec riots is given by C. G. Power in his memoirs entitled A Party Politician, Toronto, Macmillan, 1966, p. 81-93.

⁶ Bruce Hutchison, The Incredible Canadian, Toronto, Longmans, Green and Co., 1953, p. 37-38.

which, over the years, materially increased support for his party among wealthy businessmen who wished to back a winner. The Conservatives too, even with few Quebec seats, still had to court French Canada in the interests of preserving national unity. Throughout the 1920's and 1930's, therefore, French Canadian isolationism stood like a kind of grey eminence behind all Canadian foreign and defence policy decisions.

So deep had been the gulf opened by the conscription crisis that the political influence of French Canada in national policy was almost suspended for several years after the war. During this time, other consequences of the war had also begun to exert influence on Canada's attitude toward the world. One factor was the horror of war instilled in many Canadians by the four years of terrible slaughter. Throughout the country, there was a strong feeling that war was too frightful ever to be repeated; that the Great War was indeed the war to end all wars. But should war come again, pacifists insisted, Canada must not once more be dragged in. To many, this meant severing ties even with Britain, for they thought that Europe, with its chauvinism and its diplomatic machinations, was the primary source of war in the world. Canada's only hope of avoiding contamination was isolationism, a self-imposed quarantine.

Believers in this doctrine were to be found at the highest levels of government in Canada. A distinguished Canadian jurist, Archer Martin, wrote to Mackenzie King in 1923: "The 'war drunk lunatics' . . . of Europe have learnt nothing and never will. . . . One man in Downing Street still has the power to hurl us into the shambles of war! They

simply, one and all cannot be trusted."⁷ In another letter to King three years later he argued: "We in Canada have the opportunity and the power, if we rightly insist upon it, of removing ourselves from the horrors and paralyzing burdens of further European wars. Surely we at least who have got nothing out of the war . . . except graves, pension lists, and grinding debt and taxation, should have learned our lesson once and for all time?"⁸ In King, a humanitarian already committed to respecting French Canada's desire for isolationism, he found a receptive audience. As Prime Minister, the Liberal leader was later to pursue the cause of peace so diligently that he walked wide-eyed into the trap of appeasement.

Another important consequence of the Great War was the emergence of a particularly Canadian nationalism among English Canadians. A strong sense of pride in Canada as a distinct nation grew out of the country's war achievements and gradually began to exceed the earlier pride in the Imperial connection. The post-war foreign policies of the Conservative Party reflected the desire of a large proportion of English Canada to partake of the best of both worlds. But if Canada sought to preserve firm Imperial ties while functioning as an autonomous nation, it was obvious that the nature of the Empire had to be changed.

⁷ Archer Martin to Mackenzie King, 14 Sept., 1923. King Papers; as quoted in James Eayrs, In Defence of Canada: From the Great War to the Great Depression (Vol. I), Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1964, p. 5.

⁸ Martin to King, 14 Sept., 1926. King Papers; as quoted in Eayrs, op. cit., p. 6.

Sir Robert Borden (as he became in 1917) agreed with Lord Milner that: "The only possibility of a continuance of the British Empire is on a basis of absolute out-and-out equal partnership between the United Kingdom and the Dominions . . . there is no other way out."⁹ In the years following the war as Mackenzie King's Liberal Party leaned obviously toward pacifism and isolationism, the Conservative Party under Borden and his successor Arthur Meighen strove unsuccessfully to preserve the Empire as a real political unit.

A start in the co-ordination of Imperial planning and policy had been made with the advent of the Imperial War Cabinet in 1917. This body, composed of five British ministers and the Prime ministers of all the self-governing Dominions, had, however, been primarily concerned with jointly directing the war effort. It carried over after the war at a more junior level in the form of the British Empire panel at the Peace Conference, but after the Imperial Conference of 1921, this too ceased to exist. Communications reverted to those which could be maintained between Prime Ministers and through Dominion-appointed cabinet ministers resident in London. The fact was emerging that in external affairs Canada could not have her cake and eat it as well. If she pressed her claim to sovereign nation status in the world community, as she clearly tried to do by signing treaties independently at the Peace Conference and later by having her own delegation in the League of Nations, she could not logically compromise that status by making policy en bloc with the rest of the British Empire.

⁹ Sir R. L. Borden, Canadian Constitutional Studies, Toronto, 1922, p. 115 as quoted in MacKay and Rogers, op. cit., p. 82.

~~The question of the renewal of the Anglo-Japanese Naval Treaty~~
in 1921 was the last major Imperial policy matter to be decided by the
~~Dominions and Britain acting together.~~ The Canadian Prime Minister,
Arthur Meighen, managed to persuade Britain not to renew the Treaty in
view of strong American objections. This solution merely confirmed the
impracticability of a single Imperial policy, however. Non-renewal may
have saved Anglo-American and Canadian-American good relations, but it
was quite unsatisfactory to Australia and New Zealand, whose security
it reduced. To survey the entire problem of naval armaments in the
Pacific, the Commonwealth Conference agreed to call a meeting of Pacific
powers. The resulting Washington Naval Conference was attended by
Sir Robert Borden as the Canadian representative on the British Empire
delegation. The immediate product of the Washington Conference was the
Five Power Treaty, designed as a replacement for the Anglo-Japanese
Treaty. This treaty set tonnage ratios on capital ships and aircraft
carriers for the major powers--the British Empire, the United States,
Japan, France and Italy.¹⁰ Although the treaty greatly improved Anglo-
American relations and temporarily stabilized the strategic situation in
the Pacific, it contributed to Japan's feeling of isolation which in turn
probably encouraged that country's later aggressions.

The issue of the Anglo-Japanese Treaty had underlined the fact
that geographical differences made the formation of a single Imperial
foreign policy difficult, to say the least. The Chanak incident of the

¹⁰ United States and British Empire, 5; Japan, 3; France and Italy, 1.75.
G. P. de T. Glazebrook, A History of Canadian External Relations, Toronto,
Oxford University Press, 1950, p. 356.

following year made it clear that these differences could and would shatter any system of Commonwealth policy dependent upon consultation unless such consultation was maintained constantly. Britain, standing alone against Turkish troops advancing on the Straits, telegraphed the Canadian, Australian and New Zealand governments asking if they would associate themselves with the British actions and if they would send troops in case of war. The Prime Minister of Canada, then W. L. Mackenzie King, replied characteristically that, as Canada had not been kept informed of the developing situation or of British intentions, public opinion would demand that the Canadian Parliament authorize any dispatching of troops by Canada. Parliament was not in session at the time, and King's response thus had the effect of dampening any expectations of a Canadian contribution. As it was, the crisis abated without occasion arising for the sending of troops.

The Canadian government's reaction to Chanak was in no way unprecedented. It was in fact a re-assertion of Laurier's stand that Canada reserved the right to "look upon each case upon its merits as it arises." Like Laurier's position, King's had been dictated to a considerable degree by a healthy respect for the French Canadian attitude. Just as predictably, Meighen's response of "Ready, aye ready" reflected that of English Canadians still loyal to the concept of Empire. To these Imperialists, the Chanak incident demonstrated that a single Imperial foreign policy could only be applied if consultation were continuous. Lloyd George's failure to keep the Dominions informed of his Near Eastern policy made simultaneous joint action impossible.

Left to decide the case on its own merits, Canada would only have considered joining Britain at Chanak for sentimental reasons. Although Canada had signed the Treaty of Sevres,¹¹ so had many other nations, and these did not feel obliged to support British policy in the Near East. Canada had no vital interest in the Mediterranean route to the East, as had Britain, Australia and New Zealand, and she certainly had no thought of acting in a peacekeeping role as she was to do thirty years later.

The Chanak incident was perhaps less significant for Canada than was its aftermath, the conference at Lausanne. The British government gave notice that they were sending only two plenipotentiaries who, the telegram stated, were "fully acquainted with the Imperial aspect of the problem and with the keen interest taken by the Dominion Governments in its solution."¹² In spite of such manifestations of solidarity, both British and Canadians had tacitly abandoned the principle of consultation. Britain made no effort to revive the Paris or Washington precedents of Imperial delegations, and Canada under King made it clear that if she were not to be included completely in the treaty making, she would not be included at all and would not consider herself bound by any action of the mother country.

¹¹The Peace Treaty with Turkey following World War I.

¹²As quoted from Glazebrook, op. cit., p. 360.

By 1923, a new concept in Imperial relations was emerging, and it was defined at the Imperial Conference held in that year. The Canadian-American Halibut Treaty of 1922 had set a precedent for dominions to negotiate and sign international treaties independently of Britain without such treaties becoming binding on any other part of the Empire. The Conference therefore recognized the right of particular parts of the Empire to make treaties affecting their own interests. It was agreed that if other parts of the Empire would be affected, they would be consulted, or if the entire Empire were involved, the established practice of consultation and an Empire panel would be followed.

The 1926 Imperial Conference went further, recognizing the full equality of status of all self-governing members of the Empire, both in internal and external affairs. "The total effect, then, was that each unit of the commonwealth had independent powers of legislation, and that for negotiations--whether or not leading up to a treaty--a flexible procedure was accepted which combined arrangements for consultations and co-operation with freedom of action."¹³ Although in theory, no member of the Empire was to commit any other member by unilateral action, in practice Britain, through her widespread defence commitments, potentially involved the dominions in major treaty obligations which they had not originally intended to undertake. Thus, although Canada avoided participation in British treaties dissecting Czechoslovakia and guaranteeing Poland, she recognized that her own interests were involved some time before these treaties were violated and Britain went to war.

¹³ Glazebrook, op. cit., p. 382.

Upon officially gaining independent status in external affairs by the Statute of Westminster of 1931, Canada made no haste to pursue a strong foreign policy. Diplomatic missions were established to look after Canadian interests in a number of foreign capitals,¹⁴ but the Department of External Affairs at Ottawa remained too small for any serious study of Canadian foreign policy.¹⁵ This was principally because both the Liberal and Conservative governments of the period considered the domestic crisis of the Great Depression to be far more important than foreign affairs. In addition, especially in the King government, there was the pacifistic distrust of foreign policy and diplomacy as corrupting European practices which led to entanglements and war.

Revulsion against the Great War had contributed to the formation of the League of Nations, but ironically the fear of being drawn again into war caused the North American countries to avoid binding commitments to the League. The United States disassociated itself from the League in the belief that it was merely a contaminating influence on the purity and idealism of the American nation. Canada, though a member of the League, held to her policy of no commitments and studiously avoided overseas entanglements. Statements of Canadian delegates to the League in 1920 and 1925 left no doubt of Canada's sentiments: "Fifty thousand Canadians under the soil of France and Flanders is what Canada has paid for European statesmanship trying to settle European problems. I place

¹⁴Including Washington, Paris, Tokyo and Geneva.

¹⁵Exclusive of clerical staff, the Department had seven members in 1929. Glazebrook, *op. cit.*, p. 383.

responsibility on a few; I would not distribute it over many; but nevertheless it is European."¹⁶ "She is realizing today more intensely than she did at the time of the Great War, what it has cost her; she therefore hesitates to undertake in advance rigid obligations which would render her liable to intervene in conflicts so far removed from her shores."¹⁷ Having achieved freedom of action with respect to the Empire, Canadian governments were not about to assume new obligations to an international body for which they felt even less affinity. This reluctance was indeed only logical, for the Dominion, once free of British domination in external affairs, required a period of self-analysis and stocktaking before it could launch into a serious, independent foreign policy involving overseas commitments.

It is unnecessary to chronicle in detail the course of Canadian participation in the League of Nations from 1920 to 1930. A brief summary will suffice to show that, as has been indicated above, Canada's policy was one of no commitments. This policy was founded upon the eminently reasonable premise that Canada as a country had no enemies and was almost immune from attack by virtue of her geographical position. Successive Canadian governments recognized that the only enemies Canada

¹⁶ League of Nations, Records of the First Assembly (1920), p. 379; as quoted in James Eayrs, In Defence of Canada; From the Great War to the Great Depression, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1967.

¹⁷ League of Nations, Records of the Sixth Assembly (1925), p. 379; as quoted in Eayrs, op. cit., p. 7.

was likely to make were those acquired through Empire or League commitments. In discussing the League arrangements for collective security, a Canadian delegate, the Liberal Senator Raoul Dandurand, pointed out in 1924 " . . . that in this association of mutual insurance against fire the risks assumed by the different states are not equal. We live in a fireproof house, far from inflammable materials. A vast ocean separates us from Europe."¹⁸ Feeling that Canadian "insurance premiums" were too high, Canada had earlier pressed for deletion or amendment of Article X of the League Covenant which called for "the members of the League . . . to respect and preserve as against external aggression the territorial integrity and existing political independence of all members of the League. In case of such aggression, or in case of any threat or danger of such aggression the Council shall advise upon the means by which this obligation shall be fulfilled."¹⁹ Canada's amendment was designed to leave her uncommitted by adding the words: "Taking into account the political and geographical circumstances of each state," and a paragraph concluding: " . . . but no member shall be under the obligation to engage in any act of war without the consent of its parliament, legislature, or other representative body."²⁰ The amendment failed to obtain unanimous assent by the single negative vote of Persia, which

¹⁸ Raoul Dandurand on the Geneva Protocol, 2 October, 1924, as quoted in Walter A. Riddell, ed., Documents on Canadian Foreign Policy 1917-1939, Toronto, Oxford University Press, 1962, p. 464.

¹⁹ Riddell, op. cit., p. 441.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 444.

felt itself to be too exposed to the dangers of aggression to permit the luxury of optional collective guarantess.

Although most reluctant to incur any obligations toward collective security, Canada, especially when under King's government, was a vigorous proponent of the other basic principles of the League, arbitration and disarmament. Her enthusiasm for the former not infrequently took the form of rather smug assertions on the ideal example afforded the world by Canadian-American relations.²¹ On the latter issue, that of disarmament, Canadian conceit was even more ludicrous. M. Dandurand's proud declaration that ". . . the three thousand men in our permanent force are certainly not a threat to the peace of the world"²² was very true, but irrelevant in view of Canada's admittedly "fire-proof" condition. The entire Canadian view of the League was not untypical of the international spirit of idealism and hope of the late 1920's, except that whatever enthusiasm Canadians displayed was largely the product of an abhorrence of the possibility of military involvements. Thus Mackenzie King wrote to William Phillips, the American minister in Ottawa in 1928: "The pre-eminent value of the League lies in its positive preventitive action."²³ Arbitration, conciliation, a spirit of

× co-operation, and disarmament were supposed by King and his advisors to

²¹ See M. Dandurand's statements in Riddell, op. cit., p. 463.

²² Ibid., p. 464.

²³ Ibid., p. 468. King to Phillips on the Multilateral Treaty for the Renunciation of War, 30 May, 1928.

make the use of force by the League unnecessary or at least undesirable. The very presence of a threat of force by the League, in the form of either sanctions or military collective security seemed to detract from the effectiveness of peaceful means of settlement. Even admitting that collective security was necessary, both Liberal and Conservative Canadian governments objected to Canada's assuming any commitments herself. The Canadian delegate, Conservative Justice Minister Charles J. Doherty observed in 1921: "Surely it can be fully carried out in the spirit, and without derogation to its letter, by guarantee being given by those whose super-eminent power enables them to do it, and whose interests in obtaining it furnish adequate consideration for giving it."²⁴

Canadian participation in the League was basically an exercise in idealism. As residents of the fire-proof house, Canadians gained no benefits from the insurance supposedly provided by the organization. On the other hand, they constantly faced the risk of involvement in European disputes. Unshakably determined to avoid binding commitments abroad, Canadian governments made a show of supporting aspects of the League which involved no such commitments. Canadian delegates ostentatiously supported the principle of the League in 1920, expressed faith in the future of the Permanent Court of International Justice in 1921 and enthusiastically endorsed the Multilateral Treaty for the Renunciation of War in 1928. To agreements involving even a slight degree of

²⁴ Charles J. Doherty, Memorandum published 1 June 1921, as quoted in Riddell, *op. cit.*, p. 434.

military commitment such as the Geneva Protocol of 1924, the Canadian government gave at best only a very conditional acceptance. The Draft Treaty of Mutual Guarantee of 1922 and the Treaty of Mutual Assistance of two years later were "earnestly considered" but rejected on a variety of pretexts, the underlying reason for which was Canada's firmly entrenched isolationism.²⁵ Perhaps Canada's clear refusal to accept commitments was more honest than the approach of the other League members who endorsed the treaties of collective security and then failed to carry out their obligations. On the other hand, Canada's avoidance of responsibility may have served as an excuse for other nations to shrug off their previously accepted duties in guaranteeing peace by the use of League force. In any event, the Canadian policy of no commitments was a contributing factor to the League's failure in the crises of aggression during the 1930's.

From the end of the First World War to within several years of the beginning of the Second, then, Canadian foreign policy was based on isolationism. In the process of evolution towards independent status in foreign affairs, Canada deliberately reduced her involvement with British Imperial policy. The efforts of Conservative Party leaders to reorganize the Empire culminated almost inadvertently in the British Commonwealth, among whose members the only stipulated political connection was a common sovereign. Although Imperial sentiment remained strong, it was

²⁵ For further information on specific Canadian reactions to treaties and international commitments between the wars, see Riddell, op. cit.

superceded in most cases by the desire for peace, status and freedom from overseas entanglements. In the practical application of independent status to external affairs, principally in the League of Nations, Canadian governments consciously avoided assuming new commitments to the international community. The effect of these closely related policies on the national defence establishment was obviously to be disastrous. In no danger of attack by virtue of her geographical position and with no firm military commitments abroad, Canada seemed to have no need of an army, navy or air force except for performing domestic duties.

Although this situation was undoubtedly ideal from the point of view of government expenditure, it was inherently very dangerous for the country. It was too easy for a complacent government and population to allow the military machinery to become run down. The very fact that the army was organized completely on the British model and was thoroughly dependent upon Britain for equipment, higher training and foreign intelligence made it a target for Anglophobes who opposed the Imperial connection.²⁶ When members of this group such as O. D. Skelton, Under Secretary of State for External Affairs after 1925, and P. C. Larkin, Canadian High Commissioner in London from 1922 to 1930, had the sympathetic ear of Mackenzie King, the army's future was not hopeful.²⁷ As it happened, the machinery for quickly enlarging the Canadian armed forces came perilously close to extinction between the wars. Had that machinery not been

²⁶The Canadian army's dependence upon Britain will be discussed in detail in the following chapters of this paper.

²⁷For a more complete discussion of the anti-British sentiment in Canada, see James Eayrs, op. cit., p. 12-15.

preserved by relatively few determined men in the 1920's and 1930's, the Canadian divisions which helped to guard Britain in 1940 and 1941 might not have arrived until too late.

CHAPTER II

CANADIAN DEFENCE POLICY AND THE MILITARY,

1919 TO 1922

At the conclusion of "the war to end wars" the Canadian government was faced with the massive task of re-establishing the nearly 360,000 men of the Canadian Expeditionary Force who would be returning from Europe. The fact that a further 60,000 members of the C. E. F. would never return at once intensified the nation's feeling of obligation to the survivors and its determination that similar wars must be avoided in the future. Other aspects of the war had proved no less shocking to Canadians than the casualty lists. The country had incurred a huge war debt at a time when general economic opinion held that the public accounts of a country should be kept in the black. As the war had stimulated the Canadian economy, fortunes had been amassed by a number of war profiteers. A product of the war, the Russian Revolution, had unleashed the peril of "Bolshevism" and the sharp post-war depression of 1919-1920 gave this new menace a breeding ground in the widespread labour unrest in both Canada and the United States.

Into this atmosphere of instability came the returning soldiers, in many cases only to swell the ranks of the unemployed and discontented. Frustrated by the government's failure to provide jobs and financial recognition of their sacrifice, the returned men posed a real threat to the internal security of the country. Much of their anger was directed at the business establishment and at the officer class, groups they felt

had not shared the wartime hardships of the common soldier.¹ Fortunately, however, they also were bitter enemies of the "Bolshevik" and Socialist agitation throughout Canada. These they classed as "aliens"--former immigrants from Germany and Central and Eastern Europe--or at least alien sympathizers, whose presence and goals were a threat to the livelihood and way of life of patriotic Canadians. In 1919, F. N. Law of the Great War Veterans' Association declared: "We are opposed to the alien and will be opposed to him until such time as he gets out of the country. . . ."² A G. W. V. A. colleague named Wilson argued that: "The foreigner who does not conform to British ideals is a cause of unrest. He is undesirable, and our resources and wealth should not be accessible to him, neither should the job a Great War Veteran could fill. . . ."³ Under these conditions, the public peace could be threatened by both Socialist and Veterans demonstrations as well as by clashes between the two groups.

One such clash occurred in Winnipeg towards the end of January, 1919, and was reported to the Militia Council at Ottawa by the District Officer Commanding Military District 10.

¹See James Eayrs, In Defence of Canada: From the Great War to the Great Depression (Vol. I), Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1964, p. 41-43.

²From D. C. Masters, The Winnipeg General Strike, Toronto, 1950, p. 61: as quoted in James Eayrs, op. cit., p. 47.

³From a Report of Proceedings of the Dominion Convention of the Great War Veterans Association of Canada, Vancouver, 3 July, 1919, in Legion Records; as quoted in Eayrs, op. cit., p. 47.

At 2.00 P.M. on Sunday the 26th of January, some 1500 to 2000 Veterans assembled in the City Hall Square and the Socialist Meeting [a memorial service for the murdered Berlin Socialists Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht] was not held, but some of the Socialist fraternity in the neighbourhood were rounded up by the Veterans and made to kiss the Union Jack and roughly handled. The Veterans then split up into three different columns and visited the various known Socialist headquarters, which they wrecked. . . . One of these [columns] visited the Alien Quarter in the North End of the City, another proceeded to Elmwood, paying a visit to the Edleweis Brewery, the proprietor of which is a naturalized German. This place was badly smashed up. The third party of Veterans visited the establishment of S. Blumenburg, the . . . noted anti-conscriptionist and Socialist. . . .

On Monday the 27th January, three large parties of Returned men again assembled, and the situation began to look somewhat serious. The feeling of the Returned soldiers against aliens and firms employing them was running high, and some irresponsibles amongst the Returned soldiers attempted to inflame the others by proposal that all establishments such as the Swift Canadian Company, the Canadian Pacific Rlwy., Shops, and the Canadian National Rlwy., Shops, should be raided and wrecked and the aliens employed thereat beaten up and chased out of town.⁴

A full-scale riot was averted by the intervention of the District Officer Commanding at the request of the Mayor. Brigadier-General H. D. B. Kethen "pointed out to [the Veterans] that they were destroying their hard earned record in the Field, and advised them to go about getting their aims brought about in a proper and constitutional manner, in which they would be given every possible assistance and support."⁵

⁴Memorandum by Brig.-Gen. H. D. B. Ketchen, 10 Feb., 1919. Army Records; as quoted in Eayrs, op. cit., p. 46-47.

⁵Ibid.

In the face of such examples of widespread discontent, the Canadian government looked to the army as a stabilizing force. Immediately after the war, however, the army establishment did not appear to be a particularly strong bulwark. The Canadian Militia, as it was called, consisted of three forces, the Permanent Force, the Non-Permanent Action Militia, and the Reserve Militia. The primary function of the Permanent Force was to be training of the Non-Permanent "citizen soldiers", who comprised the bulk of army manpower in time of war. Reserve units existed on paper as reinforcements for the N.P.A.M. should they be required, but in peacetime they received no training and in fact had no more than paper existence. Although small N.P.A.M. units existed around cores of veterans after 1920, in the disorganized re-establishment and depression years between 1918 and 1924, only the Permanent Force could be relied upon to provide aid to the civil power. Legally, N.P.A.M. troops could also be used for this duty under the Militia Act, but the government realized that only as a last resort should citizen-soldiers be used against civilians. Presumably, professional soldiers would be less likely to sympathize with those they were called in to control and hence would retain the necessary military discipline.

[In 1919, Permanent Force strength was little more than 3,000 all ranks. In June of that year, therefore, the Minister of Militia and Defence, Major-General Sydney C. Mewburn (Unionist, Hamilton East) introduced an amendment to the Militia Act authorizing an increase in the Permanent Force establishment from 5,000 to 10,000 men.] A sudden hundred

per cent increase might be expected to produce a prolonged and vigorous outcry from all quarters of Parliament but the debate, though sharp, was relatively brief. That the amendment passed at all is a clear indication of the alarm with which the people's representatives viewed the domestic situation. Major-General Mewburn, of course, hastened to assure the House that it was not the intention to increase up to the maximum immediately, but added: ". . . it may be necessary in the near future to add to the present permanent force in a reasonable way. . . ." ⁶ In answer to a question, he mentioned 7,000 as a possible number for the standing army. In defence of the increase, he explained:

. . . a permanent force is absolutely necessary for the preservation of law and order in every country. I regret to have to say that I am confirmed in that belief by events that have been happening all over the world; the troubles that are arising to the south of us and the troubles that are arising in different parts of Canada. Judging by many letters I have had from all parts of Canada, it would appear as if in some cases people are getting stampeded. I have even been told that the Government are negligent in that they have not a permanent standing army of at least 100,000 men in Canada. ⁷

Several of the more radical members of the House were not convinced that this argument was at all sound. The appeal of A. R. McMaster (Liberal, Brome) was typical of this criticism:

Do not wave the red flag in the faces of these discontented people by increasing by 100 per cent your military establishment and telling them that we need 10,000 men to keep order in Canada. . . . It is not the size of your military establishment; it is not the number of your soldiers; it is the ready obedience which the people give to constituted authority that is necessary. ⁸

⁶Canada, House of Commons Debates (hereafter cited as H. of C. Debates), June 24, 1919, p. 3966.

⁷Ibid., p. 3968-3969.

⁸Ibid., p. 3969-3970.

In spite of the passage of the amendment no substantial increase in Permanent Force strength was made. Even at the beginning of the Second World War, its establishment was well below the originally stipulated 5,000.⁹ The government's failure to bolster Canada's standing army was no doubt due in part to a shortage of money during the post-war depression. It may also have been affected by changes of policy accompanying Meighen's replacement of Borden as Prime Minister in the summer of 1920.

Members of the Canadian General Staff and Permanent Force, encouraged by Parliament's prompt passage of the Militia Act amendment, soon became disillusioned by its lack of implementation. In spite of its lack of success in obtaining quantity, the Permanent Force was able to maintain its quality, particularly in its choice of post-war officers on the basis of their war records. With government expenditures largely going toward demobilization and domestic re-establishment, the size of the standing army was severely restricted by financial considerations. But because few new officers were required in the post-war establishment, only the most outstanding applicants were chosen. On the basis of his wartime career, one of the most distinguished of these was Temporary Lieutenant-Colonel George R. Pearkes, V.C., D.S.O., M.C., Croix de Guerre, formerly commander of the 116th Battalion, C.E.F.

Born in Watford, England, in 1888, Lt.-Col. Pearkes had already enjoyed a full life by any standards. An emigrant to Canada at age 18,

⁹ Permanent Force strength was 4,268 total in 1939. Canada Year Book, 1939.

he spent three years working on farms near Red Deer, Alberta, before homesteading and working at Rocky Mountain House for a further three years. In the fall of 1912 he had joined the Royal North-West Mounted Police, and was posted to the Yukon for two years, until the news of war in Europe caused him to purchase his discharge and travel south to Victoria where he joined the 2nd Canadian Mounted Rifles as a trooper. Already a Lance-Corporal when the unit left for France in June, 1915, Pearkes rose rapidly from the ranks to his final position as Lieutenant-Colonel at the war's end. Five times wounded, he won his decorations in some of the bloodiest battles of the war--The Somme, Passchendaele and Arras. The citation for his Victoria Cross laid particular emphasis on his outstanding powers of leadership. Obviously he was a logical choice for transfer into the Permanent Force at the war's end.

As a member of the Canadian Expeditionary Force in 1919, Pearkes would normally have been demobilized. Interested in the army but undecided on his future course, he added his name to a list of officers and men applying for admission to the peacetime active force. When nominated to one of five Canadian openings at the British Staff College at Camberley, he made up his mind to pursue a career in Canada's peacetime army, even though it meant a reduction of rank to Major at the outset.¹⁰

¹⁰The reduction in rank was logical and natural, for the C.E.F. had been 140 times the size of the peacetime Permanent Force. The number of officers of each rank in the P.F. was comparatively very limited, hence a reduction in rank was frequently necessary to gain admission. Pearkes and other officers in this situation were, however, permitted to retain brevet rank; hence Pearkes remained a Brevet Lt.-Col. with a list rank of Major.

As a Permanent Force officer in the period between the two World Wars, Pearkes experienced at first hand the problems and frustrations of trying to maintain some kind of preparedness in the Canadian Army. As a realistic person, he recognized that, however hopeful the world situation appeared to some people after 1918, human nature had not changed and the Great War was not likely to be the last. As he observed later, ". . . it seemed more than likely that there would be disturbances the world over and perhaps Canadian troops would be required. . . ." ¹¹ This being the case, Canadian military preparedness was a necessity, though perhaps a regrettable one.

(The army) in which George Pearkes decided to make his career (was very obviously modelled on the British Army. Virtually every aspect of the Canadian Militia mirrored its parent army. ¹² Apart from the different insignia, British and Canadian uniforms were identical and were bought at the same English tailors. ¹³ Many Canadian regiments were affiliated with sister regiments in Britain and both sides felt a strong pride in such connections. In the matter of organization and training, the two armies were so similar that command positions could have been easily interchanged, as indeed was the case in the Great War. In peacetime, regular exchanges

¹¹The now Major-General G. R. Pearkes, V.C., in an interview with Professor R. H. Roy, University of Victoria, 30 November, 1965 (Number 16), p. 5 of transcript. (Henceforth, interviews in this series will be abbreviated, e.g.,: R. H. Roy, Pearkes Interviews, No. 16, 30.11.65, p. 5.)

¹²For an inside view of this relationship, see Maurice Pope, Soldiers and Politicians, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1962, p. 53-54.

¹³Hawks, in Saville Row. R. H. Roy, Pearkes Interviews, No. 19, 22.12.65, p. 17.

of personnel were routine between the Dominion and the mother country, particularly at the Staff level. For junior officer training, Canada had only the Royal Military College at Kingston, and each year sent senior officers to a variety of British military schools.¹⁴ To anyone who criticized the degree of dependence on Britain for officer training institutions, the Canadian army could point out that the opportunity to train with British and Empire professional soldiers was a most valuable experience for Canadians. The maintenance of such institutions by Canada would be too expensive, considering the limited number of officers involved, and would deprive Canadian officers of the extremely useful personal contacts among the military men of the Commonwealth established during training in Britain and India.

Even more significant than the Canadian army's organizational derivation from the British was Canada's extensive dependence upon Britain for her military equipment. This dependence was partly the logical effect

¹⁴ Most of the Canadian Permanent Force officers who rose to high rank in the Second World War had taken courses at the Imperial Defence College; at the Staff College, Camberley; at the Quetta, India, Staff College; or at the Senior Officers School, Sheerness. Many had taken other special courses in England or had been attached to British Army units at one time or another. The Annual Report of the Department of National Defence lists officers attending such courses or on exchange. Some familiar names are: Colonel-on-Staff (Hon. Brig.-Gen.) A. G. L. McNaughton, C.M.G., D.S.O., General List, December, 1926 to December, 1927 (Imperial Defence College), Major E. L. M. Burns, M.C., R.C.E., February, 1928, to December, 1929 (Staff College, Quetta), and Lieutenant G. Vokes, R.C.E., August, 1927, to March, 1929 (School of Military Engineering).

of the Canadian Militia's long association with the British Army in the colonial era. The situation was perpetuated for the sound military reason that it was desirable for Canada to have equipment standardized with that of her most likely and most indispensable ally in any serious conflict. Another important consideration was that Canadian industry was not adequate at this time to produce efficiently all the armaments required by Canada. It was much more economical, for example, for the Canadian government to order its artillery and gun mountings from the long British production runs than to establish specialized arsenals at home to meet the Canadian artillery's relatively limited needs. As for Canadian designed equipment, the controversy over the Canadian-made Ross rifle during the Great War¹⁵ had caused the government to think twice about trying to develop its own new equipment when proven British material could easily be obtained, frequently at less cost.

Indeed, economy was probably the key argument in favour of dependence upon Britain in armaments. From a purely military point of view, reliance upon another country for defence materiel is a dangerous policy. Admittedly, Canada had no need to fear that its arms supply would ever be cut by British hostility, but other factors posed just as great a risk. The most obvious disadvantage was the 3,000 mile sea

¹⁵The Ross, a straight pull bolt action rifle, accurate and reliable enough in target shooting, had been found to jam in rapid fire situations, probably owing to its close tolerances. In spite of this shortcoming, it had been adopted by the Canadian army before the Great War. During the war, Canadians at home were outraged when stories circulated of soldiers killed in action when their Ross rifles had jammed. It became customary for Canadian soldiers to discard their Rosses, picking up British Lee-Enfields from the battlefield. This deplorable situation led to the adoption of the Lee-Enfield rifle by Canada after the war.

supply line from Britain to Canada. If Canada were ever invaded by an enemy who could block this route, the Dominion's supply of war materiel would soon be exhausted. Although this situation was unlikely, particularly in view of British naval strength, it was not impossible.

A second disadvantage to dependence upon Britain was that, should Britain suddenly have to increase her own armaments to meet a threat of war in an emergency, Canada would receive only what her supplier could spare, which would not necessarily be much. These arguments were recognized by the Canadian government and military authorities after the Great War but were overridden by other considerations. To establish in Canada the basis of a complete armaments industry standardized with that of Britain would be extremely costly. With the post-war depression and the disastrous Great Depression of 1929, no Canadian government could afford to spend millions on defence industries. Even had the necessary money been available, national opinion strongly favoured disarmament to the extent that munitions manufacturers were popularly branded "merchants of death". The public and Parliament were reluctant enough to support a below minimum military establishment in Canada without being called upon to endorse a national armaments industry. The many exponents of the "fire-proof house" view of Canada condemned even the trickle of war supplies from Britain for contributing to a military preparedness which was unnecessary.

Obviously, then, British influence was strong on the Canadian army. Like George Pearkes, a considerable number of British emigrants had taken up careers in the Canadian Permanent Force. For these men especially, the British Army was a sort of spiritual home, for the ties

of sentiment remained strong. Pearkes' experiences at the Staff College, Camberley, illustrate both the strength of the Imperial connection and the value of the training at such institutions. In classes at Camberley he sat next to Major J. S. S. P. Viscount Gort, V.C., D.S.O., M.V.O., M.C., later to be Chief of the Imperial General Staff. Brig-Gen. J. S. Dill, C.M.G., D.S.O., was head of Pearkes' division and, like Gort, later became a C.I.G.S. The distinguished New Zealander, Lt-Col. Freyberg, V.C., C.M.G., D.S.O., was another colleague with whom Pearkes became friendly at the time. Five of the British officers present had served with the Canadian Corps in the War.¹⁶

For each officer, mixing with professional soldiers from all over the Dominions was not only interesting at the time; it also meant that he had established contacts throughout the Commonwealth with whom he could exchange ideas and opinions on military affairs in the years to come. As Pearkes observed:

. . . as far as I was concerned I feel that [the course] meant a great deal towards the Commonwealth unity. I was fortunate enough between the wars to go over to England several times and I met people who had been on this course or similar courses. We've kept up a correspondence. I remember . . . Gort was Director of Military Training in India and I was Director of Military Training in Canada and we wrote to each other and I got some exchange of views from him. I think that it was invaluable to the individuals.¹⁷

It is a commentary on the uniformity of the British and Dominion army organizations that the only notable difference between Canadian and

¹⁶ R. H. Roy, Pearkes Interviews, No. 16, 30.11.65, p. 15.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 16-17.

British officers was their different social backgrounds. Pearkes
recollects:

. . . the Canadians to some extent kept themselves together and there was a feeling of some difference. I mean to say, the very fact that we referred to ourselves mainly as the "coloured troops" indicates that there is a slight difference between ourselves and the regular British officer. I had the advantage . . . of going to an English public school, so I was closer to the English officer than the others who were strictly Canadians.¹⁸

The courses at the Staff College introduced Pearkes to the training method of exercises without troops and to the highly developed science of military staff work. In addition, senior officers lectured on military history and members of the government came to the College to speak on the political side of defence issues. Topical matters were debated, such as the role of the tank as a substitute for cavalry, an issue which remained under discussion for many more years. The general concensus at Camberley was that trench warfare was now obsolete, although the concept of a war of movement had not yet been evolved.¹⁹ All of this kind of theoretical military thinking was of immense value to Major Pearkes, for as an infantry officer in a battalion at the front he had obtained no opportunity to view the broader aspects of military science. At the beginning of 1920, therefore, he returned to Canada fully qualified to assume a staff appointment in the peacetime army.

On 23 January, 1920, Pearkes assumed the position of General Staff Officer, 2nd Grade in Military District 13, with headquarters at

¹⁸ R. H. Roy, Pearkes Interviews, No. 16, 30.11.65, p. 17.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 10-11.

Calgary, Alberta.²⁰ The military conditions he found at Calgary were typical of the Canadian Militia in most parts of the country at this time. There were no Permanent Force barracks in the city and the squadron of Lord Strathcona Horse stationed there had to be crowded into one end of the Calgary armoury,²¹ while their horses were kept in an old stable nearby.²² There were quarters for only one officer in the armoury, so Pearkes stayed first at the Ranchman's Club and later in an apartment some distance from the armoury. He recalls:

At that time we were trying to reorganize the militia. I don't think that a full plan for reorganization came out-- it dribbled out. But that first year was a year in which you kept the old soldiers of the First War. The militia units were almost veteran clubs at that time. The men, particularly the officers who had served in the unit stayed together and then the men met periodically. . . . It was more a social club. They came and talked about the old war days and we very soon, whether it was in 1920 or 1921, we began to get word that certain units would be retained and it was no good having those made up entirely of old soldiers. The old soldiers didn't want to come back into the militia and we must try and stimulate younger men to come in, and the way in which we could attract them more than anything else, it seemed, was through athletics. . . . So we had an indoor baseball league, an indoor basketball league and boxing. . . . In that way we tried to encourage men to associate themselves with the militia. They didn't even have to go so far as enlisting at

²⁰ For purposes of administration, Canada was divided into eleven Military Districts, each centred on a major provincial city. M.D. 1 - headquarters, London, Ontario; M.D. 2 - Toronto, Ontario; M.D. 3 - Kingston, Ontario; M.D. 4 - Montreal, Quebec; M.D. 5 - Quebec City; M.D. 6 - Halifax, Nova Scotia; M.D. 7 - Saint John, New Brunswick; M.D. 10 - Winnipeg, Manitoba; M.D. 11 - Victoria, British Columbia; M.D. 12 - Regina, Saskatchewan; M.D. 13 - Calgary, Alberta.

²¹ R. H. Roy, Pearkes Interviews, No. 16, 30.11.65, p. 20.

²² Ibid., No. 17, 7.12.65, p. 2.

the time but we were trying to keep alive the spirit that some defence force would eventually be formed and young men would be required. Recruiting for the Permanent Force was very restricted.²³

That the situation was no better anywhere in Canada was evidenced by statements of the government members in Parliament. What was worse, members of the Opposition made it clear that they saw no need for concern over the situation. In the Commons on June 16, 1920, the Hon. Hugh Guthrie (Unionist, Wellington South), Minister of Militia and Defence in the new Meighen cabinet, hastened to confirm that the government would not have the Permanent Force recruit beyond the 5,000 mark, in spite of the recent authorization for a strength of 10,000. Noting that the present force totalled 3,555, all ranks, Guthrie remarked that he was "a little disappointed to see all over Canada the slowness with which recruiting for the permanent force is being done."²⁴ Later, he reported almost apologetically: "I have gone over the figures of the permanent force with them and I have asked that this force be cut down to the minimum to avoid expense."²⁵ Having made this second statement, Mr. Guthrie should certainly not have been surprised at the failure of Canadians to rush into the Permanent Force. "Cut down to the minimum" it hardly presented an enticing prospect for a future career.

(On the subject of the militia, the Minister at least displayed an awareness of the problems facing such men as Major Pearkes.

²³R. H. Roy, Pearkes Interviews, No. 16, 30.11.65, p. 20-21.

²⁴H. of C. Debates, June 16, 1920, p. 3640.

²⁵Ibid., p. 3641.

. . . One of the chief difficulties we find at the present time is that of recruiting and reorganizing the militia units. Nearly all the militia units were broken up at the time of the war. Some of them retained a mere paper existence. Some of them retained what you might call a nucleus, but speaking generally the war resulted in the complete dis-organization of the militia of Canada. A large part of the work at headquarters is to reorganize the militia. . . .²⁶

We have a paper organization of about 110 infantry regiments in contemplation and about 75 batteries of artillery. . . . In addition we propose to establish a number of batteries of machine guns.²⁷

In a rather lame concluding statement supporting the 1920 militia estimate of \$12,500,000,²⁸ Guthrie observed: "I think I am within the judgment of the House when I say that if we are to continue as a self-respecting country we must maintain a reasonable militia force . . . a force sufficient to prevent invasion from without and to maintain peace at home."²⁹

(A heated debate ensued in which the first broadside was fired by the Hon. W. L. Mackenzie King (Liberal, York North), Leader of the Opposition and firm anti-militarist.)

The Minister seems to think that at the present time we ought to vote an amount at least equal to amounts that were being voted prior to the war. . . .³⁰ Before the war it was pretty generally anticipated . . . that a menace was threatening the world, and that it was necessary to meet

²⁶ H. of C. Debates, June 16, 1920, p. 3641.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 3642.

²⁸ This figure, given on p. 3636 of Hansard, 1920, differs from the figure of \$12,802,000 for 1920-21 in the Militia Vote Table of the 1922-23 Canada Year Book. See Appendix I of this paper.

²⁹ H. of C. Debates, June 16, 1920, p. 3636.

³⁰ The militia expenses for 1914 were \$10,988,162. Canada Year Book, 1919.

that menace by increasing our military and naval forces. . . . But conditions are wholly different today. There is no world menace. Where does the minister expect invasion from? The Minister says that this expenditure is needed for the defence of Canada--defence against whom? There is no answer; there is no answer to be made. There is not an hon. gentleman on the other side who will say that a single nation at the present time has any hostile intention or attitude of hostility toward this country, or that there is the slightest danger of Canada being invaded from any quarter.³¹

Continuing his remarks, King presented what was to be for the next few years one of the most common arguments against expenditures for training camps and permanent barracks. He contended that the large numbers of demobilized ex-soldiers in the country would be available for the defence of Canada.³² This may have been true to a degree, but many of the veterans were so fed up with soldiering that discipline might not come easily to them in an emergency. Also, as evidenced by the Winnipeg riots of 1919, the masses of discontented "returned men" themselves posed a threat to the internal security of the country. If these men were to become the defenders of Canada then some force would apparently have to be available to defend Canada against them.

The debate continued with Sir Sam Hughes (Liberal-Conservative, Victoria), the controversial ex-Minister of Militia, criticizing the increased expenditures on the police and Permanent Force. Somewhat idealistically in view of the revulsion for things military in most parts of the country, he called for encouragement of the Non-Permanent

³¹ H. of C. Debates, June 16, 1920. p. 3646.

³² Ibid.

Militia as a citizen army to serve out of a sense of patriotic duty in time of need.³³ As Major Pearkes was discovering, this was not the easiest task in the world. The greatest stumbling block to creating and maintaining an efficient military establishment was not the need to keep government expenditure down in a time of depression and repayment of war debts. This was a factor, of course, but far more significant was the deep psychological wound inflicted by the war and by conscription on all regions of the country, most notably Quebec. (Radical members of Parliament might oppose what they termed "militarism" on humanitarian and idealistic grounds, but members from Quebec feared it as a real threat to the unity of Canada. "Militarism" led to military involvement and eventually to war, and Mr. Roch Lanctot (Liberal, Laprairie-Napierville) spoke for most French-Canadians as he protested the increased defence expenditures: "When we see all the nations of Europe practically disarming . . . why should Canada go deeper and deeper into militarism, since we have no acknowledged enemy who might attack us tomorrow or the day after?"³⁴)

The militia was not without its defenders, however. H. M. Mowat (Unionist, Parkdale) pleaded that Non-Permanent Militia officers should be given adequate remuneration for their services:

³³ H. of C. Debates, June 16, 1920, p. 3649-3650.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 3650.

. . . Those who have [organized militia regiments] will realize that there is a great expense inseparable from the work. A man has practically to give up his time and business to get his battalion together, and it is a very small amount to compensate him for his work to give him this dollar per man on the strength. And after that he is very much out of pocket in connection with the work he does.³⁵

Thomas Tweedie (Unionist, Calgary West) observed that "the recent war appropriations of Japan have been heavier than they were at any time during the war; they are proportionately heavier than those of any other country in the civilized world." He concluded his remarks with the warning: "I tell you that you must be prepared to meet your enemy."³⁶

An excellent presentation of the army's point of view was made by Lt-Col. N. F. Cockshutt, the Conservative member for Brantford:

There is no doubt, as has been very frequently shown in this House, that Canada is the most poorly defended country in the world today, and when the hon. member for Quebec East (Mr. La Pointe) and the hon. member for Marquette (Mr. Crerar), recommend that we begin disarmament, we have not in this country anything [sic] to begin to disarm as armaments go. . . . As long as humanity is as it is we are going to have wars; and whether you have a League of Nations or anything else, you must have a force that you can call to your aid when diplomatic effort fails.³⁷

Lt-Col. Cockshutt's words might have been applied to almost any year in the 1920's and early 1930's. They were certainly no less true in 1921.

During the debate on the militia estimates in April of that year, Mr. Guthrie showed that the Canadian defence expenditure for 1921

³⁵ H. of C. Debates, June 16, 1920, p. 3659.

³⁶ Both of Mr. Tweedie's remarks from ibid., p. 3670.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 3672.

represented \$2.15 per capita as against Australia's \$6.13, New Zealand's \$5.82, Britain's \$22.36 and the United States' \$13.13. This news seemed to please neither the "pacifists" nor the "militarists" in the House. To each side, the Great War pointed out opposite lessons. "Pacifists", like A. R. McMaster (Liberal, Brome), insisted that military preparations had proven to be a cause of war and demanded the suspension of militia training.³⁸ "Militarists", such as John Wesley Edwards (Liberal-Conservative, Frontenac), refuted this allegation defending preparedness as a deterrent to war.³⁹ The Permanent Force, now some 4,312 strong,⁴⁰ also came under fire. Using Mackenzie King's argument of the year before that the demobilized troops were adequate defence for Canada, Mr. C. G. Power (Liberal, Quebec South) called for a \$2 million reduction in the \$6,255,000 Permanent Force estimate.⁴¹ Over his objection and those of others, the House passed a total militia vote of \$12,564,000, a decrease of \$238,000 from the previous year's estimates.

³⁸ H. of C. Debates, April 19, 1921, p. 2295-2296.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 2278.

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 2297. Power's attitude was that of the Quebec wing of the Liberal Party, whose support Mackenzie King was careful to cultivate by a policy of no commitments and anti-militarism. Power's argument ran:

I submit that at the present moment, when we have no enemy either near or far to face, when, even if we had, we have a stronger and better disciplined and more efficient fighting organization in our returned men than we have ever in our history [sic], when this organization can be called together in a matter of weeks to face any foe,--there is no necessity to incur this heavy military expenditure.

The year 1922 marked a turn for the worse for the Canadian army. A Liberal government under Mackenzie King had replaced the Conservative government, and the new Minister of Militia and Defence, the Hon. G. P. Graham (Liberal, Essex South) frankly admitted to Parliament that ". . . at the present time our permanent force is not of sufficient strength to preserve internal order. That is an absolute fact."⁴² In spite of this "absolute fact" he promptly announced further cuts in Permanent Force and Militia expenditure, practically apologizing for the need to maintain forces for internal security. Other Liberals approved the reductions but were prepared to go even further. Mr. William Duff (Liberal, Lunenburg) and Mr. J. J. Hughes (Liberal, King's, P.E.I.) suggested the elimination of the \$1,400,000 vote for annual drill for the N.P.A.M. The latter observed:

I do not think we should anticipate any trouble from foreign countries. . . . That we should have some force there is no doubt, but I think the present force is too large for internal purposes, and the general policy should be adopted of cutting it down to the lowest possible point.⁴³

Thus challenged, Mr. Guthrie was forced to justify his policy to members of his own party. Falling back on what he hoped would be accepted as expert opinion, he reported:

Ten days ago I put the question squarely to Maj-Gen. J. H. MacBrien, Chief of Staff of the army since August, 1920: If we cut out military training for one year, what

⁴² H. of C. Debates, April 25, 1922, p. 1136.

⁴³ Ibid., p. 1144.

effect would it have? He said: "The effect would be disastrous on any attempt to maintain an organization of voluntary militia throughout the Dominion of Canada".⁴⁴

To this statement, the Minister added the appeal: "Do we propose, as a young nation, to shirk the responsibilities of a nation while asking for all the privileges?"⁴⁵

The answer remained unclear, lost somewhere in a prolonged and heated debate which began on the subject of the value of the militia and ended with an exchange on the issue of Canadian commitments to Britain.⁴⁶ As the discussion of the militia estimates neared its end, the question of cadet services came up. In an expression of opinion which was to become as certain an annual occurrence as the estimates themselves, J. S. Woodsworth (Labour, later C.C.F, Winnipeg North Centre) deplored "any expenditure which would tend to develop the military spirit among the boys of this country."⁴⁷ Although opposition members⁴⁸ sprang to defend the cadet service for its character building function, Mr. Graham's axe pared \$100,000 off the original \$450,000 estimate, eliminating the six day summer cadet camps.⁴⁹ Not all of the government's efforts to reduce defence expenditures were necessarily

⁴⁴ H. of C. Debates, April 26, 1922, p. 1180.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ H. of C. Debates, May 9, 1922.

⁴⁷ H. of C. Debates, May 18, 1922, p. 1974.

⁴⁸ Notably T. L. Church (Liberal-Conservative, Toronto North) and the former Minister of Militia and Defence, Mr. Guthrie. Ibid., p. 1973 and 1977.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

harmful to the military establishment, however. The National Defence Act, passed during the 1922 session, was designed to reduce administrative costs by consolidating the Naval Service, the Air Board and the Department of National Defence under one minister from January 1, 1923.

While the members of Parliament clashed over the abstracts of defence policy, the men responsible for the defence of Canada faced hard times. T. L. Church (Liberal-Conservative, Toronto North) told of the conditions in his constituency:

Take the 12th Battalion, the York Rangers, General Brock's old regiment, with him at Queenstown Heights. They today have not a house or an armoury, and Toronto has had to provide them with a property. . . . Is this country so hard up that it cannot provide this unit and others with an armoury but must let the officers pass the hat to keep up the regiment?⁵⁰
 . . . In the city of Toronto they have to buy their own typewriters and even pass around the hat in order to help equip a battalion to go overseas [in the Great War].⁵¹

Major Pearkes recalls in detail the situation in Calgary, a situation typical of the other Military Districts in Canada:

. . . . In that period I had a group of half a dozen ex-officers who were connected with the militia, or had been connected with it overseas and to keep their interest up we ran an occasional Saturday afternoon scheme out in the country, without troops, along the same lines as we had the tactical exercises without troops at Camberley. . . . I was bubbling over with enthusiasm and had all this course behind me and I was imparting what knowledge I had gained to some of the senior officers who were keen. . . . We used to have a little party which would go out into the hills and discuss tactical situations there. . . .⁵²
 John Huggill [Attorney General in the Alberta government] was one of this little group who went out.⁵³

⁵⁰ H. of C. Debates, April 25, 1922, p. 1146.

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 1147.

⁵² R. H. Roy, Pearkes Interviews, No. 17, 7.12.65, p. 5.

⁵³ Ibid., p. 6.

. . . That first two years, '20 and '21, was very much a period of trying to organize the units and get together a small cadre of officers who would keep the militia alive until we could sort of get settled down and found out what was going to be done and that sort of thing. . . .⁵⁴ The Artillery, and I think only the Artillery, came into camp and they brought in skeleton gun troops and they fired in practice. There was a Regular Artillery battery, "C" Battery, which was stationed in Winnipeg and after they'd carried out the training, the firing practices, of the militia batteries in Manitoba and in Saskatchewan, then they came to Sarcee Camp bringing their horses and their guns. The militia batteries came in sometimes bringing horses and guns, more frequently just bringing firing detachments, and the batteries from Alberta and British Columbia trained at Sarcee and that procedure went on for many years.⁵⁵

. . . then in the winter of '21 and '22 there was the first Militia Staff Course which was run, the idea being to try and get some officers who were given some staff experience and who were remaining so that in the event of hostilities breaking out again . . . we'd have a corps of partially trained officers. . . . These Militia Staff Courses occupied most of my time for the next five or six years and they were sort of a main activity--the main training activity taken on by the General Staff Officers. They consisted of a series of lectures which went on all winter one night a week and we dealt with all manner of subjects.

. . . The preparation of those lectures took quite a lot of time. There was a sort of general guide which was sent out by the General Staff Officer at Kingston who prepared a series of précis which were sent out as a guide for the lectures, and then one set some indoor exercises and one thing and another like that. . . .⁵⁶ Starting in September of '22 they had the first practical portion of the Militia Staff Course, which consisted of two weeks in camp--two camps, one in Eastern Canada and one in Calgary--and they trained on the Sarcee Indian Reserve. All the General Staff Officers of the western Districts (that's Manitoba,

⁵⁴R. H. Roy, Pearkes Interviews, No. 17, 7.12.65, p. 5-6.

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 16-17.

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 6.

Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia) were brought in and the G.S.O 1 from Kingston came and conducted those courses. At that time they always had a British Staff Officer attached to G. 1 at Kingston and he used to come out to train.⁵⁷

. . . The main units were located in Edmonton, Red Deer, Calgary, Lethbridge and Medicine Hat. . . .⁵⁸ We would run one [Staff Course] in Calgary and one in Edmonton, and that meant going up each week to Edmonton from Calgary. We were pretty well continually on the move [between the main military centres] during those two years . . . and there was always the problem of getting accommodation and finding out people who would take an interest in the militia. . . . You had to work really through the returned men and it was a question of perhaps seeing officers that you had known overseas, or somebody else had known. General Bell was a great help because he'd been in Alberta as District Staff Adjutant . . . before the war and he had the knowledge of the country and of the people who had been interested in the Militia before the First War. The Militia had been active before the First War, . . . far more active than they were immediately afterwards and there were still a few of the old militia officers who had left who were prepared to carry on.⁵⁹

. . . We were called upon to organize rather a lot of units because at that time the general scheme was to have several divisions of militia [in fact, 11 infantry divisions, 4 cavalry divisions and many artillery and support units⁶⁰]. . . . It was too large a scheme to be practical and the militia was based on the divisional formation . . . and you tried to organize even the smaller and more technical units. You had not only the Infantry and the Artillery and the Engineers and Army Service Corps but you had such things as Veterinary Sections and Ordnance groups; and Signals were very difficult to organize. They required a lot of training to get the ordinary young man up to the standard required of the Signallers. . . . Wireless was almost unknown then--the theory of wireless--and one had lectures . . . on that.⁶¹

⁵⁷R. H. Roy, Pearkes Interviews, No. 17, 7.12.65, p. 17-18.

⁵⁸Ibid., p. 6.

⁵⁹Ibid., p. 17-18.

⁶⁰Lt-Col. D. J. Goodspeed, ed., The Armed Forces of Canada 1867-1967, Ottawa, Queen's Printer, 1967, p. 93.

⁶¹R. H. Roy, Pearkes Interviews, No. 17, 7.12.65, p. 5-7.

. . . The thing which we were always lamenting was the fact that the units were so understrength and that they had so few men that there was little . . . they could do [to build up the efficiency of the army] . . . [The Strathconas] got a certain amount of drill, but the stables, exercising the horses, looking after their quarters in the armouries took up a great deal of their time. Then the N.C.Os. were sent out to help these militia units from time to time and there were what were called Provisional Schools run to qualify N.C.Os. and officers. . . . None of the officers were qualified for the militia and while you were trying to get in young officers, any young ones had no war experience at all. So these Provisional Schools were run and during the wintertime there were what were known as the Royal Schools where the militia officers and N.C.Os. who could spare the time came in for perhaps a month or six weeks and lived at the [regional] headquarters [while taking the courses].⁶²

. . . We had nothing to work on but we still went ahead and worked. There was very little money. The militia really put all their pay back into their own units. There was a lot of volunteer work without any pay at all. Militia officers took no pay--most of the men took no pay and they made contributions to keep the unit going. There was a wonderful era in which those people who felt defence was necessary [worked for it] in spite of what the government thought.⁶³

The Permanent Force Staff at District headquarters whose duty it was to deal with all these matters was relatively small. In addition to the D.O.C., Brig-Gen. A. H. Bell, and Pearkes, the G.S.O., there were only the Administrative Officer, an Army Service Corps officer, an Engineer officer, a Cadet officer and a Paymaster. As there was no proper officers' mess in the city except the small room used by the half-dozen Strathcona officers, the District officers formed a Military Institute to

⁶²R. H. Roy, Pearkes Interviews, No. 17, 7.12.65, p. 21.

⁶³Ibid., p. 22.

furnish one. "Membership was not confined to officers who were in the militia, but [was open to] any officer who had served overseas, and there was a very nominal membership fee."⁶⁴ Local officers and visitors alike were often asked to lecture on their special experiences in one place or another, with the idea of broadening the outlook of the other members of the Institute.

Perceptive officers were particularly conscious of the need to foster good relations between the army and the public. Pearkes comments:

Very wisely, I think, General Bell said to his Staff Officers "don't lose touch with the civilian life", and he joined the Rotary Club and I joined the Kiwanis Club. . . . I was a regular attendant at the Kiwanis meetings and I found that very useful in after life. . . . I think that it's one thing that I have always tried to impress upon Permanent Force officers, that they should mingle with the civilian life; they shouldn't live a little cloistered life. There's too much of a tendency for them to go into a mess and stay and mix only with their own people. . . .⁶⁵ That was one thing when I became District Officer Commanding, I tried to get them to go out and mix as much as they could with the civilian life because I always maintained it's not the regular soldier you're going to lead into battle, it's the civilian soldier and you've got to understand what civilians are like.⁶⁶

During his period at Calgary, Pearkes also took a great interest in the Boy Scout Movement, founding a new troop and making available to it some of the Strathconas' horses for riding practice. He accepted the position of District Commissioner of Boy Scouts for the Calgary area and used to

⁶⁴R. H. Roy, Pearkes Interviews, No. 17, 7.12.65, p. 7-8.

⁶⁵Ibid., p. 8.

⁶⁶Ibid., p. 9.

spend almost all of his spare time visiting the various scout troops in the district. Recognizing the public relations value of Pearkes' scout work, the Chief of Staff, General MacBrien, went so far as to commend the young officer for his interest in the Scout Movement in one of his official reports.⁶⁷

Several other circumstances made the years at M.D. 13 a valuable experience for Major Pearkes. He served for a time as A.D.C. to the Governor-General, Sir Julian Byng, first during the latter's visit to Calgary in 1921 and subsequently for a month at Rideau Hall in Ottawa. Here he came in contact with Canadian military and political leaders and gained an appreciation of the workings of Canadian government at its highest level.⁶⁸ In Calgary itself, while staying at the Ranchman's Club, he met R. B. Bennett, at that time an M.P., and later Conservative leader and Prime Minister. As they were both rooming at the Club, the two men met frequently and often breakfasted together and Pearkes conceived a great admiration for this politician who shared his own belief in the British Empire. In a reflection of the sympathetic bond between the Conservative Party and the army, both men fully supported Arthur Meighen's "Ready, aye ready" position on the Chanak incident of September, 1922.⁶⁹

⁶⁷R. H. Roy, Pearkes Interviews, No. 17, 7.12.65, p. 13.

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 13-15.

⁶⁹Ibid., p. 10, 11.

Chanak served to arouse a flurry of interest in Canadian military preparedness. In Calgary, Pearkes recalls:

. . . The military began to get a bit interested as to whether we would be called upon to send troops there. With the prospect of seeing foreign service, . . . interest was revived in the militia at that time. . . . People began to get a bit excited and say "if there was any chance of going overseas, remember me". And of course, while we had no directive at all from headquarters as to raising of any troops, we had it quite in mind that there was the possibility. Of course, nothing did come of it but we followed that crisis . . .⁷⁰

At Ottawa, "the Chief of the General Staff was instructed by the Minister of Militia and Defence 'to prepare in concrete form a memorandum showing what troops are available for despatch in the event of same being necessary'."⁷¹ In the absence of General MacBrien, a reply was submitted by the Director of Military Operations, Col. J. Sutherland Brown. Brown reported that a small Expeditionary Force based on the Permanent Force of 3,593 all ranks "could be recruited and equipped and ready for despatch in two weeks."⁷² Sending overseas a larger force presented more of a problem, for headquarters had in existence no standing plan to deal with such a situation. Brown optimistically predicted, however, that "there would be no difficulty in raising by

⁷⁰R. H. Roy, Pearkes Interviews, No. 17, 7.12.65, p. 11-12.

⁷¹James Eays, In Defence of Canada (Vol. I), p. 78; included quotation from Memorandum by Private Secretary, Minister of Militia and Defence, for Chief of the General Staff, 18 Sept., 1922, Army Records (S.3948, I).

⁷²Eays, op. cit., p. 78, quoted from Brown "Memorandum for the Honourable the Minister," 18 Sept., 1922, Army Records.

voluntary enlistment, within a few months, a force of 200,000 Officers and men."⁷³

No such force was needed, of course, for the King government had already made up its mind and the request for information had been largely hypothetical. Mackenzie King's reaction to Chanak in the end was a severe blow to Canadian military preparedness. On the one hand it caused the army to delay indefinitely the making of what seemed now to be unnecessary plans for sending a Canadian Expeditionary Force overseas. Even more seriously, it reinforced the belief of the general public that Canada no longer had any overseas military interests or obligations and hence that an army was becoming increasingly unnecessary.

⁷³Eayrs, op. cit., p. 79, quoted from Brown "Memorandum for the Honourable the Minister," 18 Sept., 1922, Army Records.

CHAPTER III

YEARS OF HARDSHIP AND YEARS OF HOPE

1923 TO 1930

Domestic affairs in 1923 greatly increased the difficulties experienced by the Canadian army. Until that year, the role of supporting the civil authority had imposed no great strain on the military organization. Permanent Force units had been called out to preserve order on several occasions, once in Quebec City in June 1921 and twice in Sydney, Nova Scotia, in 1922.¹ Major Pearkes had experienced trouble at first hand with miners in Alberta, whose unrest seemed likely to require army intervention: "They were a pretty red lot--at least we thought they were a red lot--and there was dissatisfaction amongst the miners and so we were always feeling we never had enough permanent men."²

This fear proved to be justified when, early in 1923, as many as 1,100 Permanent Force troops³ were provided under the Militia Act to preserve order in a threatened strike situation at Glace Bay, Nova Scotia. As the total Permanent Force strength in 1923 was only 3,611, units had to be hastily despatched from half way across Canada. The diversion of almost a third of the entire standing army during the winter

¹James Eayrs, In Defence of Canada: From the Great War to The Great Depression, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1964, p. 66.

²R. H. Roy, Pearkes Interviews, No. 17, 7.12.65, p. 21.

³Figure given by Eayrs, op. cit., p. 66.

Militia training season can only have had serious effects on the already overtaxed Militia training apparatus of the army. Also, the fact that so many troops had been considered necessary to handle one incident showed plainly that the Permanent Force was pitifully inadequate to deal with a number of simultaneous disturbances across Canada. Mackenzie King proved to be more alarmed by the excessive demonstration of force than by the weakness of the army revealed in that demonstration. As a result, the government took no steps to increase the efficiency or preparedness of the army.⁴

The army estimates introduced in March 1923 in fact seemed more calculated to decrease than to increase military efficiency. The all-inclusive Militia Vote fell from \$10,852,000 to \$10,799,000. In this reduction the Permanent Force lost \$240,000, but the Militia training vote gained \$50,000 and the vote for warlike stores, which included essential ammunition for artillery training, was increased from a record low of \$100,000 to \$160,000.⁵ (Mr. Graham reported that for 1922-23, 22,000 militiamen had received nine days training at their local headquarters and a further 8,851 had spent twelve days at summer camps. Of a paper strength of 122,906 in the N.P.A.M., only 33,900 officers,

⁴The cause of the excessive reaction had been the over-zealousness of a County Court judge under whose authority the Militia Act provided that troops could be called out. To discourage recurrences of such actions in Canada, the King government amended the Militia Act in 1924 to stipulate that only the attorney-general of each province had the power to call out troops.

⁵Statistics from Canada Year Book for the appropriate years. For complete data, see Appendix I.

N.C.Os. and specialists had been trained in the past year owing to the continued shortage of funds.⁶ In spite of this rather pitiful situation, several members of the House advocated even greater economies. Mr. Woodsworth announced: "I will gladly support any motion looking towards a reduction of our military estimates with a view to eliminating them altogether just as soon as possible."⁷ Roch Lanctot (Liberal, Laprairie-Napierville) also opposed the defence expenditures in a speech which was in itself an indication of the anti-military pressure constantly being applied to the Liberal Party by its Quebec wing.⁸ The army was not without its defenders on the opposition side, however. Mr. Guthrie and Maj-Gen. Mewburn both appealed for increased expenditures and even the Minister himself sprang to the support of the Cadet Service. "Boys who are inclined to be weaklings physically after going through the course of training for two or three years develop into fine young fellows and become straight physically, mentally and morally."⁹

Over the protests of a few army supporters, the defence estimates grew immeasurably smaller year after year. (In February, 1924, Mackenzie King suggested to his new Minister of Defence, E. M. Macdonald) (Liberal, Pictou) that he

⁶ H. of C. Debates, March 6, 1923, p. 859-860.

⁷ Ibid., p. 867.

⁸ Ibid., p. 866.

⁹ Ibid., p. 877.

. . . consider the advisability of transferring either temporarily or permanently to the Municipalities in which they may be located many of the armouries and drill halls which have been erected in different parts of our country. Were it proposed either to sell or lease these buildings as community halls to be used for such public purposes as the Municipalities concerned might desire, very considerable economies could, I believe, be effected, and at the same time a course of action which would commend itself very strongly to the public. It is not exactly turning spears into pruning hooks and swords into plough-shares, but it would be something along the same order. . . .

I believe if you could announce that at least one hundred armouries or drill halls in Canada had been converted at this time into Community Halls to serve primarily Community ends, you would be taking a course which would be to the credit of the Government from one end of Canada to the other. . . . A transition from military to community purposes is much in accord with the spirit of our time.¹⁰

The Prime Minister's attitude toward defence was thus quite clear, and in the face of this attitude the army had good reason to fear the worst.

[For the 1924 session of Parliament, the estimates dropped a further million dollars to \$9,755,000,] of which only \$8,885,573 was actually expended.¹¹ Mr. Macdonald announced that the Canadian per capita defence expenditure had fallen to \$1.46, the lowest in the Commonwealth.¹² [An army résumé of the year noted that:

Consequent on drastic necessity for economy the rates of pay for the Permanent Force had to be reduced and many men took their discharge. This involved serious reduction in efficiency of units, especially the technical services.

¹⁰ King to E. M. Macdonald, 20 Feb., 1924, King Papers, as quoted in Eayrs, op. cit., p. 305.

¹¹ Statistics from Canada Year Book, 1930.

¹² H. of C. Debates, July 18, 1924, p. 4800. Comparative figures were: New Zealand \$2.33; South Africa \$2.92; Australia \$3.30; and Britain \$15.32.

About 30,000 Active Militia trained. Officers, N.C.Os. and specialists trained chiefly at Camp Schools for 16 days; of the remainder, in most units a bare minimum necessary to maintain unit organizations trained for nine days at local headquarters. Owing to financial stringency, Non-Permanent Artillery carried out no firing practice. . . .¹³

In the Commons, Mr. Macdonald confirmed these reports with the under-statement: "This year the training of Militia in the country has been cut down materially and as compared with what it was ten years ago, the organization is a mere skeleton."¹⁴

In 1925 the financial situation of the army stabilized. Overall estimates rose slightly to \$9,903,000, and again \$647,000 of this amount was not spent.¹⁵ The army's summary of the year observed that the 1925 total expenditure "compares with \$10,998,162 in last complete year before the war (year ending 31 March, 1914). In addition to this reduction regard must be had [sic] to the diminution in the purchasing power of the dollar. It may safely be said that . . . [the expenditure] does not represent more than \$5,000,000 at pre war values."¹⁶

¹³"Summary of Naval, Military and Air Defence Services, 1867-1927," Desbarats Papers, as quoted in Eayrs, op. cit., p. 305. (G. J. Desbarats was Deputy Minister of Defence in 1927 when the report was prepared).

¹⁴H. of C. Debates, July 18, 1924, p. 4805.

¹⁵Statistics from Canada Year Book, 1925. The actual expenditure for 1925-26 was \$9,256,628.

¹⁶"Summary of Naval, Military and Air Defence Services, 1867-1927," Desbarats Papers, as quoted in Eayrs, op. cit., p. 305.

On this sum, even the Permanent Force could not function properly. The Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, the regiment to which Pearkes was nominally attached, had no mortars for demonstration purposes until an officer made a wooden model. "At one time there were as many as seven Mills grenades available; an unnamed scoundrel filched some of them for illicit fishing and thereafter tennis balls were used for bombing practice."¹⁷

Even while introducing the reduced expenditures, Mr. Macdonald admitted the gravity of the army's condition:

. . . Votes for the Militia services outside [the Permanent Force] . . . have been cut down to a very great degree. . . . As a result of the economies which the department has put into effect [the artillery service] has become paralysed practically, owing to its inability to obtain that training with the guns which is essential to maintain it in proper order.¹⁸

Indeed, the plight of the artillery was so serious that it induced the passage of a special supplementary vote which "made it possible for detachments of about 35% of battery strength to resume artillery practice at central camps."¹⁹ "Reserves of ammunition," an army report noted, "have been steadily decreasing and [are] now much below minimum required for the several types of guns."²⁰ From a point of view of preparedness

¹⁷G. R. Stevens, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry 1919-1957, Montreal, Southam Printing Co., c. 1958 (undated), p. 9.

¹⁸H. of C. Debates, May 18, 1925, p. 3287.

¹⁹"Summary of Naval, Military and Air Defence Services, 1867-1927," Desbarats Papers, as quoted in Eayrs, op. cit., p. 306.

²⁰Ibid.

the artillery was perhaps the most important arm of the N.P.A.M., for unlike most others, it could not be rapidly expanded from a small nucleus force unless the necessary large reserves of equipment and trained personnel were already standing by.²¹ The very fact that the artillery was allowed to deteriorate to such an extent was, therefore, a terrible indication of the condition of other elements of the army to which still less attention was customarily paid.²² The Government's realization that even the artillery had reached rock bottom was indicated by the supplementary estimate. Another encouraging sign was the increase since 1922

²¹ Artillery pieces could not be manufactured or obtained quickly in an emergency because of Canada's limited industrial capability and the length of the supply line to Britain. Hence, the quantity of artillery in Canada had to be that required for an expanded force, not a nucleus. Also, more than the infantry or cavalry, the artillery required its potential personnel to be fully trained in peacetime, for the science of gunnery was complicated and could not be learned quickly by the inexperienced.

²² A graphic illustration of the problems posed the artillery and the army by Mackenzie King's attitudes was the Liberal leader's reaction to the return of the Great War surplus ammunition to Canada in 1921. General MacBrien assured him that Canada was importing only munitions equivalent to the surplus held in Britain by the Canadian Corps at the war's end. King remained unconvinced:

Nothing will convince me that behind the shiploads of munitions which have come to this country since the War there are not payments chargeable to Canada which there has been every effort to conceal. I would like to have had the power to go into this whole matter under Royal Commission, but it would involve the Commission conducting part of its enquiry in Britain and interrogating officers of the British Government which would probably have been strongly resented had it been attempted, and I thought it wise therefore not to press the matter further. . . . My impression is that it will be found that we have been charged on the books of the Treasury for the munitions thus supplied; that this charge has been made against a credit which should stand in Canada's name. In all probability, on every shipment profits have been realized.

(King to P. C. Larkin, High Commissioner to Britain, 27 Nov., 1922. King Papers; as quoted in Eayrs, op. cit., p. 303.

of \$290,000 in the vote for warlike stores, which included munitions.²³

The situation by 1925 must indeed have been deplorable, for as early as 1921 the Militia Department had reported: "When all ammunition and shipments are received from England, the reserve in Canada will be 500 rounds per gun which constitutes one day's supply. . . . It would be unwise to give this statement to the public as it would show how weak our position really is."²⁴

Estimates for the year 1926 remained much the same as the preceding year and condemnations of the Canadian defence establishment were numerous, but the highlight of every session through the middle 1920's to the late 1930's was Agnes Macphail's annual attack on the Cadet Services as "the most vicious part of our national defence scheme." The Progressive Party member from Grey South East in Ontario, Miss Macphail was, like J. S. Woodsworth, one of the most sincere and persistent critics of Canadian defence expenditures in the 1920's and 1930's. In a campaign, the organization of which would have been the envy of any military staff officer, she untiringly presented her case, usually climaxing it with an amendment reducing the Cadet Services vote to \$1.00 from whatever its total was for the year.²⁵ Though always able to quote expert educational authorities in support of her stand that cadet training was bad for children, she could not convince the majority of the House.

²³ See Appendix I (General Stores).

²⁴ Meighen Papers, as quoted in Eayrs, op. cit., p. 304.

²⁵ She would have voted to eliminate it altogether except that this was not permitted by House rules.

In the four years before 1927 the Cadet Services vote had never dropped below \$400,000, a sizeable amount considering the low level of many of the other military estimates. One might have expected that the anti-militarist Quebec Liberals would have supported Miss Macphail, but curiously enough, this was not the case. In fact, the French Canadians looked to the Cadets as the one branch of the military which had no potential for involvement in a war. The Cadet Corps thus provided an outlet for the French-Canadian's own love of soldiering, and therefore, paradoxically, Quebec had the largest Cadet Corps of any province in the Dominion.²⁶

With the appointment in October 1926 of Colonel J. L. Ralston (Shelburne-Yarmouth) to succeed Mr. Macdonald, opponents of defence expenditures received a rude shock. A clear sign of change in the Liberal government's attitude towards defence came on April 9, 1927, when Col. Ralston disclosed a Cadet Service estimate that had been raised to \$500,000. Miss Macphail erupted with indignation in a scene amusingly described by James Eayrs:

Agnes Macphail moved that the Vote be reduced by \$499,999: "I have never attacked a permanent army"--she did not mean it literally but her zeal was such that no one would have doubted her if she had--"but I do object to imposing on our boys our own ideas instead of letting them think for themselves."

". . . Fear is one cause of war and fear can be largely eliminated by early training. Military training in the schools thrives on fear and produces it . . . creates a

²⁶ 66,804 Quebec cadets in 1931 against 42,561 for Ontario. (H. of C. Debates, June 22, 1931, p. 2891.)

GILBERT BOND

bombastic military spirit of toy soldierism. . . . I wish the people would say to the Department of National Defence and the government: take your hands off the schoolboys of Canada. . . ."²⁷

Anticipating the Progressives' attack, Col. Ralston had already explained that the extra \$100,000 covered cadet units which were already organized but not yet authorized and hence were functioning without any assistance from the Department.²⁸ A full scale debate could not be avoided, however, and two days of verbal conflict passed before the Minister again rose to justify his \$1.1 million overall increase in expenditures.)

. . . I ask this House to be good enough to grant . . . a sufficient sum of money to provide one permanent force soldier for every 3,000 inhabitants of the Dominion of Canada; when I ask that they grant a sufficient sum of money to provide for the training for about nine days of one citizen out of every 300 in this country, it seems to me after all that the charge of busily arming can hardly be sustained.²⁹

After presenting statistics showing that Canada's defence expenditures accounted for a mere 3.7% of her total budget and were only \$1.45 per capita,³⁰ he pointed out with respect to the N.P.A.M.:

. . . We have in Canada altogether, in artillery, cavalry, infantry, signal corps, and everything, 870 units. In 219 of these units 24 per cent, both officers and men, pool all their pay and do not draw any of it at all. In 57 of the units the pay is pooled by the officers, while they draw nothing whatever themselves. In some other units part of the pay of the officers and men is pooled, running

²⁷ Eayrs, op. cit., p. 306, as quoted from H. of C. Debates, April 9, 1927, p. 2203.

²⁸ H. of C. Debates, April 9, 1927, p. 2200.

²⁹ H. of C. Debates, April 11, 1927, p. 2248.

³⁰ See Appendix IV at end of this paper for comparative figures.

from five per cent to one hundred per cent. That applies to 79 units in all, and in 47 units, that is 5½ per cent, a portion of the pay of the officers is pooled; making in all, a total of nearly 50 per cent of the militia units of Canada in which the officers and men pool the whole or a portion of their pay.³¹

Col. Ralston's calm and reasoned explanations of the needs of the defence services did much to win support for the increased expenditures he advocated. By the late 1920's, also, the earlier strong public resentment for the military had diminished as the memories of the Great War began to fade. In the prosperous years before the crash of 1929 few besides the idealists cared if the army received more financial attention, for money seemed to be plentiful enough. The increases obtainable were still far short of those really required for military efficiency, but they at least halted the demoralizing deterioration of the armed forces.

The remaining years before the Great Depression saw the Militia estimates edge upwards, reaching a peak of \$2,325,000 in 1930. To effect these gains, the Minister required all his patience and tact. Criticisms, such as A. A. Heaps' (Labour, Winnipeg North) charge that the increased expenditures would "go in lace and gold braid",³² were both ridiculous and unfair. The more reasonable objections of Miss Macphail and her group received reasonable answers from the Minister: "I am asking for \$11,035,000 in 1928 as against \$11,243,000 in 1913-14 and \$11,593,000 in 1914-15."

³¹H. of C. Debates, April 11, 1927, p. 2248-2249.

³²H. of C. Debates, February 20, 1928, p. 640.

GILBERT BOND

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I undertake to say that if this vote were calculated in the dollar and cent value of 1913-14 it would not amount to more than \$7,000,000."³³

Although the increase provided funds for a further three days a year of camp training by N.P.A.M. units, serious gaps still remained in the skeletal Canadian defence system. "I find," reported Ralston, "in connection with the Royal Canadian Artillery at Halifax and Esquimalt, that we have not enough men to man the defence lights."³⁴

The army's situation did not improve in 1929. In spite of a Permanent Force appropriation of \$4,950,000 the previous year, the Minister announced:

It was found that the permanent force vote would not provide for the strength of 3,272 as it then stood for the remainder of the fiscal year. The strength would have to be reduced by 112 so as to bring the vote within the appropriation.³⁵

Sixty-six new recruits, a number of deserters and those wishing a free discharge were therefore released, leaving a total P.F. strength of 3,398 for 1929.³⁶ Miss Macphail for one was not disturbed by such cuts, for she could see no military threat to Canada; nor could the Minister suggest one to her. In addition to moving her reduction of \$499,999 on the Cadet Services for the third consecutive year, she joined Mr. Woodworth in fierce criticism of the increased defence expenditures. As

³³ H. of C. Debates, May 23, 1928, p. 3344.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 3345.

³⁵ H. of C. Debates, June 4, 1929, p. 3243.

³⁶ Ibid.

they observed, a higher Militia vote seemed a blatant contradiction of the spirit of the Kellogg-Briand Pact renouncing war which was even then being endorsed by countries throughout the world including Canada herself.³⁷

In defence of his estimates, Col. Ralston pointed out that Canada's per capita defence expenditure had only risen to \$1.59, still far below that of Russia at \$3.00, New Zealand at \$3.10, Norway at \$3.84 and even Germany at \$2.60.³⁸ He added:

I wish to say here that I do not, nor does the Defence Department, regard [the Permanent Force] as a defence force or a standing army in any sense of the word; it is simply an instructional cadre. Our real defence consists in the Non-Permanent Active Militia which is far from approaching the maximum numerical strength we might maintain on a three year basis, namely some 240,000 men. Let me give the figures with regard to the Militia. In 1914 we had 55,282 men as against 240,000, which would be our possible force, and in 1928, 51,575, or a reduction of nearly 4,000. Take the numbers training. In 1913-14 we gave twelve days' training to 58,563 and in 1928 . . . we provided twelve days' training for 35,581.³⁹

Such figures hardly indicated the existence of a strong army in Canada. As the Minister contended, the reverse was the case; the army was operating at subsistence level. The increases gained by Ralston had been totally absorbed by rising costs although the paper strength of

³⁷ H. of C. Debates, June 4, 1929, p. 3212 ff.

³⁸ Ibid., p. 3222-3223.

³⁹ Ibid.

the N.P.A.M. had actually fallen from 127,513 in 1926 to 123,551 in 1929.⁴⁰

Before the Great Depression had taken hold, Col. Ralston managed to introduce the 1930 estimates for a Militia vote higher than any year since 1921-22. The N.P.A.M. was to receive \$2,325,000, and the Permanent Force \$5,011,000. The vote for General Stores, steadily increased by Ralston during his years as Minister, rose to a peak of \$1 million.⁴¹ The outlook for the army, though far from bright, continued to be hopeful to this point. As the Depression deepened, however, hopes were rudely dashed. Feeling the pinch, the government underspent its Militia estimates by almost a million dollars⁴² and later in the year, Ralston left office as the Conservative Party under R. B. Bennett defeated the Liberals in a general election.

During the 1920's and early 1930's, it was obvious to members of the armed forces that their occupations were not particularly popular among most members of the general public. (The low defence expenditures approved by Parliament reflected a widespread conviction that armed forces were not really necessary for Canada. Military men realized that to reverse this attitude, they themselves would have to become propagandists in the army's cause. It should be emphasized that they undertook

⁴⁰ See Appendix III.

⁴¹ See Appendix I.

⁴² See Appendix II.

to do this, not simply to ensure their own employment as critics charged, but with the sincere conviction that efficient Canadian armed forces were indeed necessary, even in peacetime.

National Defence Headquarters actively encouraged servicemen to participate in public activities in their communities, as General Bell and Major Pearkes had done at Calgary. Individual officers, including General Sir Arthur Currie, Canadian Corps Commander in the Great War, and Brigadier-General A. G. L. McNaughton, Deputy Chief of the General Staff in 1927, addressed service club meetings on the need for peacetime forces.⁴³ In the Canadian services journal, the Canadian Defence Quarterly,⁴⁴ other officers published replies to critics of the armed forces,⁴⁵

⁴³The texts of their addresses were reproduced in the Canadian Defence Quarterly. See General Sir Arthur Currie, "The Case for a Canadian Militia," C. D. Q., Vol. III, No. 4, July 1926, p. 435; and Brig-Gen. A. G. L. McNaughton, "Some Aspects of the Work of the Department of National Defence," C. D. Q., Vol. IV, No. 2, January 1927, p. 143-149.

⁴⁴Details of the origins and publication history of the C. D. Q., as it is commonly called, are covered fully in James Esyrs' In Defence of Canada from the Great War to the Great Depression, p. 95-102, and hence have not been included here.

⁴⁵Space does not permit inclusion of excerpts from the many interesting articles to be found in the C. D. Q. in the period under study. C. D. Q. articles justifying the role of the armed forces in peacetime include the following:

Captain E. L. M. Burns, "Dialogue of a Soldier and a Pacifist," C. D. Q., Vol. II, No. 1, October 1924, p. 22.

'J. M. C.', "The Cadet System and its Relation to National Defence," C. D. Q., Vol. II, No. 2, January 1925, p. 181-182.

Sir Arthur Currie, op. cit.

Editorial, C. D. Q., Vol. II, No. 3, April 1925, p. 209-212.

Editorial, C. D. Q., Vol. VII, No. 1, October 1929, p. 1-2.

Lt-Col. G. H. Gillespie, "Some Benefits of Cadet Training," C. D. Q., Vol. IV, No. 1, October 1926, p. 73.

'H. M. L.', "The League of Nations and War," C. D. Q., Vol. II, No. 2, January 1925, p. 183.

suggestions for improving army public relations,⁴⁶ and proposals for making the Militia more efficient and more appealing.⁴⁷

The views expressed in the various C. D. Q. articles and editorials were generally reflections of the attitude of the army as a whole. Contributors saw a need for national defence forces with or without an effective League of Nations. Realistically, they maintained that the League would lack authority unless supported ultimately by the threat of force. Without the backing of force, the League could not enforce its decisions; hence the only real guarantee of both the League and of national security would be the national armed forces.⁴⁸ Similarly, "Complete disarmament might even increase the danger of war. Properly controlled armaments would help maintain a balance of power among the

⁴⁶Articles in this category include:

Lt-Com. G. E. Brandt, (U.S.N.) "Newspaper Publicity for the Navy," C. D. Q., Vol. II, No. 1, October 1924, p. 78 (reprinted from June 1924, U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings).

Major C. W. Devey, "A Cavalry Trek Through Alberta," C. D. Q., Vol. III, No. 2, January 1926, p. 216-221.

'D. D. M. K.', "News Value," C. D. Q., Vol. II, No. 3, April 1925, p. 224-225.

Captain M. F. Macintosh, "Morale," C. D. Q., Vol. V, No. 3, April 1928, p. 325-328.

'A.⁴⁷ C. B.', "Expediting Efficiency through Training," C. D. Q., Vol. II, No. 2, January 1925, p. 168.

Major Hugh M. Bell, "The Problem of the Militia," C. D. Q., Vol. III, No. 3, April 1926, p. 276-277.

Lt-Col. H. D. G. Creerar, "The Development of Closer Relations Between the Military Forces of the Empire," C. D. Q., Vol. III, No. 4, July 1926, p. 423.

⁴⁸See the articles cited under note 45.

nations. . . . Anything approaching complete disarmament would be decidedly unsafe at the present stage of the world's development."⁴⁹

In spite of Mackenzie King's well-known position on overseas military obligations, Canadian soldiers believed that Canada still had commitments to participate in Imperial defence, if only because the Dominion should not benefit from Imperial protection without being prepared to aid other parts of the Empire if needed.⁵⁰

On the domestic scene, maintaining the Militia and increasing public support were the highest priorities. Too blunt a statement of the military point of view could only antagonize the civilian:

Practice in peace prepares a nation for war and makes the other man think twice before he declares war. A properly prepared defence force of reasonable strength is the cheapest form of National Investment into which any Government or the Tax Payer can possibly put his money.

. . . There is only one thing that will prevent . . . [leaders of Bolshevism and Radical Socialists] from wrecking any decent country and that is fear of the bayonet or the sword--cold steel.⁵¹

On the other hand, " . . . the movement of any small detachment through parts of this country, where a soldier is never otherwise seen . . . ," was most productive, for " . . . the citizen discovers that the same type

⁴⁹ Editorial, C. D. Q., Vol. VII, No. 1, October 1929, p. 1-2.

⁵⁰ Imperial reinforcements still were figured to play a major part in any defence of Canada against American invasion (see below, p. 70). Apart from this, the Royal Navy remained the real guarantor of Canadian coastal security in time of war. c.f., Burns, op. cit., p. 23-24.

⁵¹ Major R. S. Timmis, "Some Lessons from a Four Days' Cavalry Trek," C. D. Q., Vol. II, No. 1, October 1924, p. 10.

of young men that till the earth or assist in his business, is found in our Permanent Force."⁵² The greatest emphasis was placed on making army officers virtual public relations men for the N.P.A.M. In 1924, one officer wrote:

We are now in this country taking a very active interest in Cadet Corps chiefly because of the physical exercises which are included in the syllabus of training. If officers of Rural Corps will take an active interest in the Cadet Corps within their areas, these should become a valuable field for recruiting for the infantry units.⁵³

Four years later prospects for the Militia had brightened:

The public are gradually overcoming their post-war apathy towards things military. Now is the time to take advantage of this state of mind. If a man knows that he has the support of public opinion in his militia duty, he will be a much better soldier than if such support is lacking. . . . Teach the men to conduct themselves in such a manner that they will deserve the support of the public, morally and financially.⁵⁴

(If the 1920's were for the Militia a time of struggle for support and for funds, they were times of chronic overwork for members of the Permanent Force.) On July 1, 1923, George Pearkes was transferred from Calgary to Winnipeg to assume duties as General Staff Officer, 1st Grade in Military District 10. Here he immediately became involved, not only with the time-consuming routine of Militia training, but also with the incredible military plan known as Defence Scheme Number 1.⁵⁵

⁵² Devey, op. cit., p. 221.

⁵³ Prower, op. cit., p. 60.

⁵⁴ Macintosh, op. cit., p. 328.

⁵⁵ A complete discussion of Defence Scheme No. 1 is contained in Bayrs, op. cit., p. 70-78 and appendices.

Defence Scheme No. 1 was the brainchild of the Director of Military Operations and Intelligence (D.M.O. & I.) from 1920 to 1927, Colonel J. Sutherland ("Buster") Brown. It was, in simplest terms, a plan of defence against attack from the United States. Although by the 1920's this possibility was only one degree less remote than an invasion of Canada by Britain, Brown, a confirmed anti-American, had taken the trouble to prepare a 200 page document on the subject during the first years of his tenure as D.M.O. & I. From his own very serious defence of the plan and from subsequent events in his life, there can be no doubt that Brown himself sincerely believed in the possibility of the British Empire going to war with the United States. Whether other officers in the Canadian army were so convinced, however, is doubtful. The curious thing about the plan was that it remained the army's only complete defence scheme for almost a decade.⁵⁶ During this period it remained a dormant political bombshell, its circulation limited to senior officers. Almost certainly, no one outside the army, even including the Minister of Defence and the Prime Minister, ever knew of its existence. One would hope that the Canadian General Staff did not accept and cling to this anachronism solely out of a belief in the infallible judgement of their Director of Intelligence. A legitimate reason for preserving the plan could have been that, in the absence of any real enemy, the United States could be used as a hypothetical enemy for purposes of training the senior Permanent Force officers and giving them a sense of purpose. Indeed, for

⁵⁶ Contemporary defence schemes existed but were not fully worked out until the 1930's. Eays, op. cit., p. 76, 77.

this role, the United States was ideal. Its territory bordered most of the Canadian Military Districts, hence each headquarters could prepare plans for defensive and offensive actions as well as dispatching senior officers to conduct reconnaissances of "enemy" territory.

This kind of activity was not only good experience, but it also provided a welcome diversion from the normal peacetime Militia training duties. Pearkes recalls:

Among the . . . remote possibilities was that of war with the United States. Nobody considered it was very likely but soldiers had to be prepared for all eventualities and as Winnipeg was a strategic centre in the defence system of Canada, we spent some time discussing what action should be taken in the event of what was known as Defence Scheme No. 1. being put into application. . . . If the enemy, the Americans, [attacked] their strategy would probably be to cut Canada in half and to prevent the natural resources of the West going to Eastern Canada. We realized that we couldn't possibly defend Canada by ourselves; we'd have to wait for the arrival of other British troops coming from the Old Country. So it was essential to gain time.

Winnipeg, as you know, is fairly close to the border--there's not very much between Winnipeg and the border in the way of physical features for defence. . . . So the scheme envisaged first of all an effort being made to gain more depth in front of Winnipeg.

There were more regular troops in Winnipeg than at any other point in Canada. We had there the Strathcona Horse which consisted of the headquarters of one squadron; we had headquarters and two companies of Princess Patricia's and we had "C" Battery of the R.C.H.A., the Royal Canadian Horse Artillery. So we had a little combined force right there in Winnipeg. Unfortunately the numbers were far, far below establishment; they were only a skeleton, but they were a skeleton. They were efficient troops, they had built a good cadre of war-experienced officers and N.C.Os., and had there been an emergency they could have been very quickly brought up to strength--at least that's what we were counting upon. And so we pictured that in the event of war we would attempt to gain some ground south of the border. . . .

We had various . . . officers carrying out a reconnaissance of the routes to the border and the country there. Actually, I made a trip from Duluth to Grand Forks and we saw something of the type of country that there was on the other side of the border.⁵⁷ . . . It was really an exercise in a reconnaissance report--that's what we deemed it as. We did look into the armoury at Duluth and were shown over that and we saw the tanks that they had there. . . . A very full report was made of our trip which was eventually sent down to the Director of Military Operations in Ottawa.⁵⁸ . . . We were taking it fairly seriously, not that we expected war, but it was a good exercise anyway.⁵⁹

One cannot help remarking upon how co-operative the "enemy" was to show the Canadians through their armouries. If any further proof were required of Canadian-American good relations, it was provided by the subsequent staging in Winnipeg of an international polo game between members of the Lord Strathcona Horse and an American cavalry regiment.⁶⁰

Also around this time, the American government set a precedent by the very friendly gesture of inviting Colonel T. V. Anderson, the Director of Military Training at Ottawa, to attend some American army manoeuvres.⁶¹

One of Major Pearkes' main duties as Staff Officer at Winnipeg was to prepare plans for the protection of public buildings in the event of riots.

⁵⁷ R. H. Roy, Pearkes Interviews, No. 18, 14.12.65, p. 1+2.

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 4.

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 2.

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 3.

⁶¹ Ibid., p. 4.

. . . There were a good many industrial disturbances at that time and troops from Winnipeg were sent to the Cape Breton disturbances at Sydney [Glace Bay], and Winnipeg itself had been a centre of the strike in 1919. And so we also considered the internal security of Winnipeg in the event of serious disturbances. . . the railway and the central buildings might have [to be defended]. . . So from that point of view there was quite a lot of interest. Winnipeg [had] a very mixed population at that time and there was a certain amount of anxiety about Bolshevik influence coming in.⁶²

In spite of Winnipeg's rather stormy background, most members of the public felt no resentment towards the Militia. As Pearkes pointed out: "I don't think there was any anti-militia feeling because perhaps the people who were from the classes where recruits from the Militia were drawn were impressed with the necessity of having some protective force more than the police. . . . I don't know what the reaction was with the foreign element, but we didn't get many recruits in those days from the foreign element."⁶³ As a result of these factors, the Winnipeg Militia units were very active and were able to keep up their authorized strengths. This, of course, meant a good deal of work for Major Pearkes who was responsible for training, as had had been at Calgary. "I was very busy all the time that I was at Winnipeg. I'd go round to the various armouries practically every night."⁶⁴ In winter, he ran a Militia Staff Course in Winnipeg during the week and one in Brandon on weekends. Royal Schools were conducted by Permanent Force infantry, cavalry, artillery

⁶² R. H. Roy, Pearkes Interviews, No. 18, 14.12.65, p. 3.

⁶³ Ibid., p. 7.

⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 8.

and Service Corps units, and for these Pearkes had to select candidates and make all the arrangements for their stay in the city during the courses.

There was never any difficulty in getting the full quota for the courses, partly because there was not a great deal of winter employment and men rather welcomed the opportunity of spending a month, six weeks, in barracks, in Winnipeg and they got a certain amount of pay for the time that they were there. Most industrial firms were only too pleased to reduce numbers or give a man his annual leave in the wintertime rather than in the summer, so we had no difficulty there.⁶⁵

Besides the Royal Schools held at Winnipeg, Provisional Schools were conducted in the smaller centres of the province by Permanent Force officers and N.C.Os., and these Pearkes would visit from time to time.

In summer, the various regular units would move out to Camp Hughes where they would train with their Militia counterparts--artillery, cavalry, infantry and so forth. The summer camps were held between agricultural seasons, and as a result "there was never any difficulty about getting troops up to the number authorized to come into camp."⁶⁶ For both the farmer and the city man the comradeship, competitive sports and mock battles of the camps were the greatest incentive for associating with the Militia. "Everybody taking part had to get into the battle; otherwise they'd been disappointed if they hadn't fired off all their blank ammunition. So one had to draw up a scheme in which all the reserves were used. . . ."⁶⁷

⁶⁵ R. H. Roy, Pearkes Interviews, No. 18, 14.12.65, p. 8.

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 9.

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 10.

At the conclusion of the summer camps, the practical portion of the Militia Staff course for Western Canada was held at Sarcee Camp near Calgary. Here, it is interesting to note, the approximately thirty Militia officers received staff instruction based largely on the syndicate system that Pearkes had experienced at Camberley. The end of the course marked the end of the soldier's year, and, following a period of leave, preparation for the winter activities would begin again.

Although Winnipeg was a keen Militia city, the army was aware of the value of a military show to win public support. Every year in early spring, a sham battle would be staged near town and on Armistice Day an impressive parade drew a large assembly of people to the Cenotaph at Portage and Main Streets. During Pearkes' period at Winnipeg a military tattoo was staged in the Armouries and proved to be very popular. As Pearkes recalls, however: "Funds were very low and although there was a good deal of Militia activity it was all done on a shoe string and mostly done gratis by the officers and men."⁶⁸ There was no construction of armouries anywhere in Manitoba and the only significant sums spent on the Militia in this period came not from the government but from private donations.

On May 1, 1928, after nearly five years at Winnipeg, George Pearkes was transferred to Victoria to assume staff duties in Military District 11 under Brigadier-General A. G. L. McNaughton. Here, in spite

⁶⁸ R. H. Roy, Pearkes Interviews, No. 19, 22.12.65, p. 3.

of an active Canadian Scottish Militia battalion and a well-established artillery regiment, the tempo of military life was slower. Even at this time, however, General McNaughton considered Japan to have very real potential as an enemy, and he took a particular interest in preparing the coastal defences of his command to meet a Japanese threat.⁶⁹ As part of an overall plan for the defence of British Columbia, he and Pearkes gave much attention to the problems of protecting the Pacific cable station at Bamfield and preventing sabotage on the province's railroads and at the important Trail smelter. By the time McNaughton was replaced with J. Sutherland Brown in December 1928, he and his staff had laid the foundations of Canada's West Coast defence in the Second World War.⁷⁰

"When Sutherland Brown came," Pearkes reports, "I took him . . . around the forts and explained the gun positions to him. He asked about the range and the range would get half way across the Strait [of Juan de Fuca] but wouldn't reach the Americans. . . . He thought all the guns were pointing the wrong way--they ought to be pointing to the south."⁷¹ Apart from his curious fixation about the American "enemy", Brown was an excellent commander. McNaughton had been too preoccupied with his larger plans for the static defence of the coast to pay due attention to the

⁶⁹ R. H. Roy, Pearkes Interviews, No. 20, 29.12.65, p. 4, 10-12.

⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 10-12. The defences included existing gun emplacements at Rodd Hill, Macaulay Point and Albert Head near Victoria, at Stanley Park in Vancouver and at Prince Rupert up the coast. Surveys were conducted for further emplacements at Mary Hill near Victoria and Yorke Island in Johnstone Strait.

⁷¹ Ibid., p. 4.

training of the Militia units which were likely to join an Expeditionary Force in the event of war. Brown, on the other hand, " . . . had always been interested in the Militia and he understood the Militia. He got on very well with all the militia officers; he was very popular and devoted far more time to the training of the units. . . ." ⁷²

Under Brown, Pearkes created several training exercises the originality and imaginativeness of which gave the lie to the popular idea that military men in peacetime are always planning for the last war. At the Vernon summer camp in 1928, for the first time in Canada, a number of senior officers staged a mountain warfare scheme, as Pearkes had recognized that a knowledge of mountain warfare techniques would be essential in any defence of Western Canada. His second unique innovation in training under Brown was the assault landing exercise at Maple Bay carried out in the summer of 1929. Having studied the Gallipoli campaign while at Winnipeg, Pearkes was concerned that the Militia in Military District 11 should experiment with the possibility of having to dislodge an enemy force which had landed at some position along the coast accessible only by water. ⁷³ He therefore prepared a combined services exercise in which the Canadian Scottish landed from a small flotilla of naval vessels to wrest a beachhead from the Seaforth Highlanders of Vancouver. ⁷⁴ After

⁷² R. H. Roy, Pearkes Interviews, No. 20, 29.12.65, p. 13.

⁷³ Ibid., p. 17.

⁷⁴ For a detailed description of the operation, see R. H. Roy's Ready for the Fray, the History of the Canadian Scottish Regiment, Vancouver, Evergreen Press, 1958, p. 29-31.

the "battle" the units retired to a field some distance inland where they enjoyed a huge barbecue and a hearty sing-song before settling down to sleep "not under canvas but . . . under the trees, which was considered quite original . . . for Militia training."⁷⁵ Indeed the whole operation had been an exciting novelty and, for the units involved, a taste of the future, though on a very rudimentary scale. A particularly important consideration also was that, altogether apart from its training value, the exercise had been beneficial to the Militia for the interest it generated among the public.

In October 1929, shortly after this event, Pearkes was transferred again, this time to the post of General Staff Officer at the Royal Military College, Kingston. Although the Director of Military Training at Ottawa was the brains of the Canadian army training system, the G.S.O. at Kingston was the heart of the system, for it was his task to see that it operated smoothly. After a brief excursion to attend a Victoria Cross winners' reunion dinner in London, Pearkes settled down to his new duties. In connection with the Military Staff Course, he had to prepare and issue new précis to the Military Districts.⁷⁶ With the assistance of the British staff officer attached to R.M.C., he also had first to prepare and later to mark the final theoretical Staff Course examinations. For

⁷⁵R. H. Roy, Pearkes Interviews, No. 20, 29.12.65, p. 14.

⁷⁶As mentioned on p. 45 of this paper, one of the duties of the G.S.O., Kingston, was to issue précis of the Militia Staff Courses to each Military District. Owing to the adoption by the army of new Field Service Regulations, based on Great War experiences, Pearkes had to rewrite these fifty or so précis to bring the Militia Staff Courses up to date.

the practical summer portion of the Militia Staff Course the officers had to draw up two weeks of tactical exercises for both Sarcee Camp and its equivalent, either Lennoxville, P.Q., or Kingston itself. In addition, Pearkes had to devise the first Staff College Preparatory Course to prepare young officers for the examinations admitting them to British Staff Colleges. In direct connection with R.M.C. he lectured to senior classes on military history and had general supervisory duties for all the military activities of the cadets.

Immersed for the next three years in his work at Kingston, George Pearkes felt the effects of the worsening Depression less than he might have done in other parts of Canada.⁷⁷ Throughout the world, however, events were taking place which would prove the need for an effective Canadian army even as events within Canada itself conspired to make that army less and less effective.

⁷⁷R. H. Roy, Pearkes Interviews, No. 20, 29.12.65, p. 23.

CHAPTER IV

THE CANADIAN ARMY IN THE GREAT DEPRESSION,
1931 TO 1935

Although the world situation altered considerably after 1930, Canadian foreign policy remained the same as it had been in the 1920's. In the context of the Great Depression, continued Canadian isolation was hardly surprising. Even had they been interested in foreign affairs, the Bennett and King governments could not be expected to involve themselves in complex external problems until the grave domestic situation had been improved. Canada was not alone in this predicament, of course. It was an ironic fact that the same world depression that did much to stimulate Japanese, Italian and German aggressions further encouraged those aggressions by distracting the concern of other nations from foreign to domestic affairs. Because most nations sought only to avoid trouble abroad when there was a surfeit of trouble at home, the entire system of collective security through the League of Nations became inoperative.

The first test of the League's will and ability to halt military aggression came with the Japanese seizure of Manchuria toward the end of 1931. As in subsequent German aggressions in Europe, the situation was complicated by the skilful propaganda of the aggressor and by a willingness to rationalize on the part of the League powers. As the most Westernized nation in Asia and as a Great War ally of Britain,

Japan was still on good terms with Britain, most of the Dominions, and France. Indeed, the Canadian delegate to the League in 1932, Borden's cabinet colleague C. H. Cahan, referred to his government as "a life-long friend of Japan",¹ anxious to find a solution acceptable to that country. Such a spirit of conciliation was encouraged by the Japanese protest that they had only been defending their legitimate interests and by a lack of sympathy for the chaotic Chinese government which, as Cahan pointed out, hardly fulfilled the League's membership requirement for a strong central government.² A final argument against drastic action was that such action would only force Japan into a corner, eliminating any possibility of peaceful settlement.

If Canada's conduct during the Manchurian crisis was no worse than that of the majority of other League members, it was certainly no better. [The Bennett government's stand was to take no stand.] Beyond recommending that the League withhold recognition from the Japanese puppet state of Manchukuo, Canada said and did nothing to influence the League. As R. B. Bennett put it to Parliament: "Would you in a position of responsibility accept what is involved in endeavouring to put . . . sanctions into force against either China or Japan? For my own part, I confess I would not."³ Nor would Mackenzie King and nor would the

¹G. P. de T. Glazebrook, A History of Canadian External Relations, Toronto, Oxford University Press, 1950, p. 403.

²Ibid., p. 402-403.

³Walter A. Riddell, ed., Documents on Canadian Foreign Policy 1917-1939, Toronto, Oxford University Press, 1962, p. 515; as quoted from R. B. Bennett in the House of Commons, May 25, 1932.

other members of the League. The proclamation of the state of Manchukuo on March 1, 1932, presented the League with a fait accompli about which no amount of negotiation could do anything. In the face of Japanese intransigence, Canada did no more than join the majority of League members in voting to withhold recognition of Manchukuo and there the entire matter rested.

[The Manchurian affair had set a precedent for League inaction in the face of bold aggression.] Canada, for one, had learned nothing from the first failure of the collective security system. With her own compelling domestic reasons for opposing the maintenance of strong national armed forces,⁴ Canada continued to call for disarmament and peaceful methods of settling international disputes. At the 1932 conference for the reduction and limitation of armaments, the speech of her representative showed the extent to which his country was losing touch with world reality:

We think . . . that this organization of peace can best be achieved at this time by emphasizing the prevention of conflict rather than the punishment of aggression; by building up machinery for conciliation rather than providing for sanctions; by using the League of Nations as a channel through which international public opinion can express itself, rather than by developing it into a super-state. In adopting this view, which we genuinely consider to be a constructive one, we are convinced that we are serving not only our own interests, but the true interests of all nations as well.⁵

⁴The overriding consideration of French Canada's isolationism, the popular hatred of war and the pressing economic problems of the Great Depression. See also Chapter I, this paper.

⁵Sir George Perley, 13 Feb., 1932; as quoted in Riddell, op. cit., p. 497.

Over the next few years, disquieting signs of future world troubles appeared in Europe. A National Socialist Germany unilaterally renounced the Versailles Treaty, restored conscription and began to rearm. Meanwhile, Mussolini of Italy, thinking to take advantage of the German situation as a diversion, pressed his country's claim to Ethiopia. When the Ethiopian crisis finally came before the League Assembly in September, 1935, Canada was deeply involved in an election campaign revolving around domestic economic problems. Neither party allowed the sensitive Ethiopian question to become involved with the election, but both Bennett, who was defeated, and King, who replaced him on October 23, instructed the Canadian delegates to the League to support the application of non-military sanctions against Italy.

Unfortunately, Canada's delegate on the sanctions committee, Walter Riddell, took it upon himself to initiate proposals for new and more harshly effective sanctions than had originally been proposed. At first the King government gave its hesitant support to Riddell, for his boldness had been warmly acclaimed by the rest of the League. When Italy protested on November 27, to Ernest Lapointe, acting Prime Minister during King's vacation absence, the French Canadian leader stood firm. Within three days, however, at his instigation, the Canadian government reversed its stand. It had never been Canada's policy to take the lead in League activity, least of all in the application of sanctions, for such a course would amount to a Canadian acceptance of foreign commitments. Having just elected the Liberal Party on a platform of saving the country from the Depression, the majority of Canadians would expect

the new government to avoid such foreign distractions as the initiating and supporting of bold League policies. Finally, French Canada, "traditionally sympathetic to the Italian people and now horrified at Mussolini's threat of reprisals, felt that Riddell and his sanctions might well produce a second world war for which Canada would be responsible."⁶

Canada's withdrawal of support from the sanctions she had sponsored shattered the movement which could have halted Italian aggression by truly effective economic measures. Although mild sanctions were applied against Italy until the summer of 1936, they were only a meaningless gesture. On December 9, 1935, the public release of an Anglo-French agreement proposing a compromise dismemberment of Ethiopia convinced League members that the two Great Powers now were prepared to condone Mussolini's crime. The Hoare-Laval agreement allowed Mackenzie King to exonerate Canada's earlier desertion of the League on the grounds that there had obviously never been any serious Great Power support for Canada's sanctions. As they had done in the Manchurian crisis, Britain and France (believed that excessive pressure on the aggressor could lead to war and that Ethiopia, like Manchuria, was not worth war.)

The majority of Canadians would have agreed with King when he observed: "I am not at all sure that when the whole story comes to be told it may not be discovered that but for the action of the Government

⁶ Bruce Hutchison, The Incredible Canadian, Toronto, Longman's, Green and Co., 1953, p. 205.

of Canada in this particular matter, at that particular time, the whole of Europe might be aflame today."⁷ By this time, however, a minority in Canada had seen the handwriting on the wall. In the Winnipeg Free Press, J. W. Dafoe wrote bluntly:

Ever since the Manchurian episode the League has been dying from a mortal wound. Direct consequences of this demonstration that collective security, the foundation stone of the League, was a sham were the failure of the disarmament conference; the Nazi defiance of the League; and the determination of Italy to attack Ethiopia. . . . The repudiation has now come after a farcical pretence at supporting League authority. . . . Notwithstanding Mr. King's comfortable words the other day, time will show that, taking the long view, Canada had a much greater interest in collective security than the government of this country had any idea of when it fell in with the grand idea that the time had come to put the League out of business.⁸

There is no doubt that after the events of 1935-36 many Canadians, including Mackenzie King himself, knew inwardly that war was coming but refused to admit that there was no longer hope of its being averted by peaceful means.⁹ Before 1935, however, crushed by the Depression, retaining bitter memories of Great War slaughter and haunted by the spectre of schism with French Canada, no Canadian wanted war and only a few dared to contemplate it. Within the armed forces, therefore, the years 1931 to 1935 were a time of near despair. All the factors noted by Dafoe had pointed to a need for stronger, better prepared

⁷ H. of C. Debates, 1936, p. 98; as quoted in Bruce Hutchison, op. cit., p. 209.

⁸ J. W. Dafoe, "The End of Collective Security," Winnipeg Free Press, 30 June, 1936; as quoted in James Eayrs, In Defence of Canada: Appeasement and Rearmament (Vol. II), Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1965, p. 32-33.

⁹ Hutchison, op. cit., p. 207.

national defences; yet with the Depression lying over the land, military preparedness in Canada was one of the lowest government priorities.]

The army estimates dropped over \$1.5 million between 1931 and 1932 and continued downward to a record postwar low of \$9,335,000 in 1934-35.¹⁰ [The 1933-34 Canadian per capita defence expenditure was \$1.19, a mere 2.7% of the year's total budget,¹¹ but incredibly the armed forces were still criticized for their expenditures. To the joy of Agnes Macphail, the Cadet Services vote plummeted from \$500,000 to \$150,000 by 1934-35, eliminating clothing allowances and summer camps. Artillery stores were reduced by \$232,000 and ammunition production was cut back in 1931.¹² For the next few years the Quebec arsenal operated for only three to four months a year and less ammunition was provided to the N.P.A.M.

[As usual, it was the N.P.A.M. that suffered most from the reduced army expenditures. In 1931 an order was issued reducing the authorized number of days training from twelve to four for almost all units. Fortunately, this order was rescinded after a number of Militia officers, supported by the Mayor of Toronto, interceded with Prime Minister Bennett. As the historian of the Royal Regiment of Canada observed: "If it had not been for the reversal of the Government's original decision it is probable that few, if any, Canadian militia units would have been

¹⁰ See Appendix I.

¹¹ H. of C. Debates, February 15, 1937, p. 899-900. See Appendix IV, this paper.

¹² H. of C. Debates, June 22, 1931, p. 2891.

able to survive in more than name."¹³ In any event, a new decision the same year reduced the number of days of training to ten. Lacking funds, no Non-Permanent units went to camp in 1931 and only artillery camps were held at public expense in 1932.¹⁴

In 1933, an exchange between the Minister of Defence, Lt-Col. the Hon. D. M. Sutherland, and opposition members revealed the near-hopelessness of the army's financial prospects:

Mr. Sutherland: . . . For the last two years practically nothing has been done for the artillery and provision is being made for them to get together a little this year.

Mr. Coote (United Farmers of Alberta, Macleod): Are training camps to be conducted this year?

Mr. Sutherland: Not in the sense they were some years ago. There will be none of the large infantry camps we used to have.

Mr. Power (Liberal, Quebec South): Will there be any cavalry camps this year?

Mr. Sutherland: Last year a number of the units took their allotment and supplemented it themselves in order to hold local camps. We want to further that practice as much as possible and some of the increase will be for that purpose.¹⁵

In the Canadian Defence Quarterly, several artillery officers wrote of their experiences at such local camps. Unable to afford horses, a Western battery used modified 1½ ton Chevrolet trucks as gun tractors. The value of this camp, and others like it, was somewhat limited by the fact that there was no ammunition available for firing practice. Although

¹³ D. J. Goodspeed, Battle Royal: A History of the Royal Regiment of Canada, 1862-1967, Toronto, Charters Publishing Company Limited, 1962, p. 336.

¹⁴ H. of C. Debates, May 16, 1932, p. 2980-2981.

¹⁵ H. of C. Debates, February 17, 1933, p. 2221.

Military District 13 at Regina was able to meet the \$210.00 expenses of the camp,¹⁶ an Eastern battery was fortunate in finding one of those private patrons upon whom the Militia depended so much during the Depression years:

The unit is much indebted to Major Bruce Hill, a former battery commander in the C.E.F. in France, who made a gift of the week's traction, altered the truck bodies, loaned the vehicles and sent them with their drivers, and paid the latter their civilian wages for the week, all at no expense to the unit.¹⁷

Had it not been for the many individuals like Major Hill who generously gave their financial and political support to the Militia regiments, particularly during the Depression, many would never have survived. From providing uniforms and equipment to interceding with the government, these men--Honorary Colonels, old soldiers and ordinary civilians--showed an interest that kept alive the morale of the N.P.A.M. and without which the force would soon have become totally useless. The army's reliance upon these individuals was increased by the fact that, unlike the United States and Britain, Canada had no strong defence industries capable of lobbying in support of greater defence expenditures. Although large firms like the Canadian National and Canadian Pacific Railways were sympathetic toward the army as the ultimate protector of their vested interests, the outcry of labour unions and the public generally discouraged active support.

¹⁶ Captain A. W. Butler, "Necessity is the Mother of . . . (A Western Battery goes to Camp)," C. D. Q., Vol. IX, No. 1, October 1931, p. 101-104.

¹⁷ 'R.S.C.', "Experiment and Experience, 1932; An Eastern Battery Goes to Camp," C. D. Q., Vol. X, No. 1, October 1932, p. 103.

An incident in Parliament at once illustrates superbly both this problem and the continuing struggle of the Militia to win recruits. On June 22, 1931, J. S. Woodsworth expressed strong disapproval of what he implied was a conspiracy between the railway companies and the army in Winnipeg to draw men into a military athletic club. Although the advertisement quoted by Mr. Woodsworth¹⁸ offered extensive facilities at the cost of only one hour's drill a week, the local labour newspaper had been outraged at the entire idea. Mr. Woodsworth automatically put the worst possible interpretation on the situation:

As this labour paper points out, in the first place it is a very serious matter when such a movement as the one I have described is founded in close connection with an industrial organization. The management is favourable to it and for any man who will not enlist there is a note of intimidation. As everyone knows perfectly well, for the management to urge that the men should join is tantamount to an order that they must join.¹⁹

Remaining unconvinced by the Minister's assurances that individual officers and not the government were paying for such organizations, the member for Winnipeg North Centre produced evidence that this case was but one of many.

. . . Apparently this kind of activity is not confined to the city of Winnipeg, for I have had sent to me by the International Association of Machinists, Montreal, the following resolution:

" . . . Resolved that we, the members of lodge 111 of the International Association of Machinists declare that we are in accord with every influence that makes for peace, and are opposed to every influence that makes for

¹⁸ Cited in full as Appendix V at the end of this paper.

¹⁹ H. of C. Debates, June 22, 1931, p. 2894.

war, that we view with distrust and disquiet the tendency to line military organization with industrial establishments and protest the action of the Canadian National Recreation Association in furthering this tendency".²⁰

A somewhat amusing example of the public indifference to the army was a brief exchange between Mr. Sutherland and Agnes Macphail earlier the same day. The Minister, seeking support for his N.P.A.M. vote, gushed: "The fact is that the honest, true militia man is one of the best citizens we have." Miss Macphail's reaction was simply: "Oh, quite."²¹

In 1932, the Department of National Defence, replying to a resolution of the Canadian Artillery Association, stated flatly that funds did not permit annual training of N.P.A.M. units at central camps.²² In Parliament, the Minister confirmed this situation with the announcement that henceforth there would be only small, weekend summer camps and no camps at local headquarters as far as whole regiments were concerned.²³

As well as lacking adequate government support for regular training, many military units experienced great difficulties with regard to accommodations. In 1932, Mr. Sutherland announced a reduction of \$12,000 in the vote for maintenance of armouries, drill halls and rifle ranges.²⁴ This cut came in spite of resolutions passed by the Canadian

²⁰ H. of C. Debates, June 22, 1931. Cited in full as Appendix VI at the end of this paper.

²¹ H. of C. Debates, June 22, 1931, p. 2893.

²² Canadian Artillery Association, Proceedings of the Annual Meeting, 1932, p. 79.

²³ H. of C. Debates, March 17, 1932-33, p. 3146.

²⁴ H. of C. Debates, May 16, 1932, p. 2980-2981.

Infantry Association every year since 1929 calling for proper armoury and drill hall facilities to replace the existing frequently unsuitable facilities.²⁵ What \$12,000 meant to the N.P.A.M. units in 1932 is indicated by the problem facing Lt-Col. Sargent of the 2nd Battalion, Canadian Scottish Regiment:

Am having a bit of difficulty with the Department in Ottawa. They refuse to take our Courtenay drill hall over, and as a matter of fact, refuse to consider any other obligation even though it is only \$20 a month. The Agricultural Society there refuse to come down in their price, so I am between the devil and the sea. We cannot afford to eliminate "C" Company and cannot afford to carry on with the rent.²⁶

Although some buildings were put up partly as projects to create employment, the government's funds for armouries, barracks and drill halls were actually applied somewhat erratically in the Depression years. Thus the Permanent Force barracks hospital at Work Point in Victoria was not replaced after its destruction by fire in 1932,²⁷ but \$1,200,000 was set aside by R. B. Bennett for construction of a Permanent Force barracks in his home town of Calgary, in spite of the fact that the city already had a Militia armoury.²⁸

²⁵ Canadian Infantry Association, Proceedings of the Annual Meeting, 1929, p. 67; 1930, p. 55; 1931, p. 51.

²⁶ C.S.W. Archives, Lt-Col. Sargent's Personal Correspondence, 1931-1934. Letter, Sargent to Bapty, September 4, 1932; as quoted in R. H. Roy, Ready for the Fray, Vancouver, Evergreen Press, 1958, p. 44.

²⁷ H. of C. Debates, February 17, 1932-33, p. 2221.

²⁸ Hayrs, op. cit., p. 317, and H. of C. Debates, March 8, 1935, p. 1554.

As a rural Militia unit, the 2nd Battalion, Canadian Scottish suffered more than did the city units. The latter frequently had proper armouries and were supported by citizens out of a sense of civic pride. Being recruited from a relatively small geographical area, the men of city units usually found it possible to meet more conveniently and hence more frequently than their rural counterparts. Finally, for training and social contacts, city militia units benefited from the convenience of the presence of Permanent Force elements in many of the important cities of Canada.

All these factors contributed to the fact that city units were usually at or near full authorized strength while rural units had to struggle for survival.²⁹ It is all very well for the historian of Toronto's Royal Regiment of Canada to write:

. . . too much should not be made of the difficulties facing the Non-Permanent Active Militia in these times. Those who belonged to the Militia enjoyed it. There was something peculiarly satisfying about going into the armouries on a parade night, meeting friends there, and spending a few hours together acquiring new skills.³⁰

But for the 2nd Battalion Canadian Scottish, the picture was different.³¹

²⁹ As an example of what perseverance can accomplish, however, in 1934 the rural 2nd Battalion of the Canadian Scottish was only 38 men below the strength of its city sister, the 1st Battalion. R. H. Roy, Ready for the Fray, p. 50.

³⁰ Goodspeed, Battle Royal, p. 319.

³¹ Even the difference in conditions between the 1st and 2nd Battalions, Canadian Scottish, are a study in extremes. See R. H. Roy, Ready for the Fray, p. 53.

To reach their drill hall at Sidney, some members of "D" Company had to come by boat from nearby Saltspring Island. As one officer reported, the Courtenay Agricultural Hall was for "C" Company hardly a cosy armoury, with ". . . windows broken from the outside, doors broken off hinges and the front door being opened allowing children to play there, leaving it in a filthy condition which necessitates our cleaning it up before using it on Drill nights."³² On the other hand, at least instruction could always be given, even in private homes when necessary, and the skills acquired could be tested in numerous schemes, for though the rural units had no ammunition, they had no shortage of nearby outdoor space in which to manoeuvre and practice fieldcraft.

One cannot help but wonder what motivated the men of the Militia to give up time and money on a cause few Canadians cared about. Whether it was patriotism, a search for adventure and challenge or a desire for good comradeship that had originally drawn them to the colours, pride in the Regiment was an obvious bond that all these peacetime soldiers had in common. Even in the earliest days of the Depression, every unit managed to put on a brave show for the public. Accounts of church parades, dinners for public officials, dances and civic and military ceremonies fill the records of Canadian Militia regiments over this period.³³ That such activities were possible was often the result of

³² Lt-Col. Sargent's File, "C" Company, 1930-1934, Letter (Copy); Thistle to Chairman, Building Committee, Comox District Agric. Assn., January 10, 1933; as quoted in R. H. Roy, Ready for the Fray, p. 44.

³³ Examples may be found in Major Roy Farron's History of the Calgary Highlanders 1921-54, Canada Bryant Press, 1955?, p. 15-19; Colonel Paul P. Hutchison's Canada's Black Watch, Montreal, T. H. Best, 1962, p. 170-176; Goodspeed's Battle Royal, p. 319-323, 336-342; and R. H. Roy's Ready for the Fray, Chapters 1 and 2, passim.

a regiment's judicious choice of an Honorary Colonel whose financial or political position and generosity would go far toward maintaining the unit.)

While Militia officers struggled to preserve some semblance of military preparedness at the regimental level, senior Permanent Force officers had to wrestle with the larger issues of planning for the entire army. In this area there were three major problems and one major complication. The first task for military planners was to calculate Canada's military requirements for the future and to draw up operational schemes covering possible situations. The second problem was somehow to persuade the government and the public to endorse these needs in men and equipment, particularly the latter. Finally, it was necessary to devise and put into operation a comprehensive training plan which would, of necessity, have to compromise between the ideal military requirements and the practical restrictions imposed by shortages of money and materiel. The great complication, separate from all these factors, was the need to maintain the relief camps founded at the instigation of the Chief of the General Staff, Major-General McNaughton.

McNaughton's idea was reasonable enough from an economic point of view. The camps would take off the streets many of the unemployed single men whose discontent might well lead to riots. Although the men would only receive a twenty cent daily allowance in lieu of pay, they would be employed on special government projects and receive free room and board. The system was entirely voluntary, designed primarily to provide drifters with food and shelter and to give them the dignity

of work at little expense to the country. By organizing the system under the army, the government would be saved the cost of setting up a special administrative body.

Originally planned in 1932 to be only a temporary measure, the camps continued on into 1935, becoming a symbol of the hopelessness of the Depression and a source of considerable embarrassment to the government and the army. Labour unions and socialist members of Parliament insisted that camp workers should do no type of work that could be done by skilled labour outside the camps. The twenty cent allowance was attacked on the grounds that it reduced camp work to the level of slave labour.³⁴ Finally, the most damaging charge from the army's point of view was that the camps were "part of the general campaign of the Bennett Government to militarize the unemployed youth and to prepare them for cannon fodder in the next war."³⁵ Such allegations were patently untrue, but they frequently received airing in the House of Commons and generally did nothing to win the army the public confidence it badly needed.³⁶

A more serious effect of the army's administration of the camps was the diversion of important administrative personnel from their

³⁴ H. of C. Debates, March 8, 1935, p. 1544-1545.

³⁵ From the Rifle Range Worker, a broadsheet circulated among the members of the camp at Long Branch, Ontario, 1 May, 1933. As quoted in Eays, op. cit., (Vol. I), p. 134.

³⁶ See H. of C. Debates, March 15, 1935, p. 1537 ff.; March 22, 1935, p. 2019-2037, and March 29, 1935, p. 2246-2259.

military duties. George Pearkes recalls that when he became Director of Military Training, McNaughton as Chief of the General Staff and Lt-Col. Crerar as Director of Military Operations as well as "practically the whole of the Department . . . with the exception of the Training Department, were involved in running these various unemployment camps across the country and that was given main consideration."³⁷ While this situation does not necessarily mean that military questions were neglected from 1932 to 1936, it undoubtedly imposed more work and more responsibility on those officers like Pearkes who were not involved with the camps. On the other hand, the relief camps may have deserved priority, for there can be little doubt that their existence was largely responsible for the surprisingly small number of disturbances requiring military intervention during the Depression.³⁸

In spite of the distractions of maintaining the relief camp system, the army succeeded in completely overhauling its operational plans by 1935 to prepare for the possibility of war. Defence Scheme No. 1 was examined and rejected in May, 1931, during an appraisal of Canadian defence requirements prior to the 1932 disarmament conference. In October, 1933, the General Officers Commanding Military Districts were instructed to destroy the plan by fire. Two other schemes were eventually

³⁷R. H. Roy, Pearkes Interviews, No. 23, 1.2.66, p. 5.

³⁸Eays, op. cit., (Vol. I), p. 124-148, may be referred to for a more detailed coverage of the relief camp system. With regard to troops aiding the civil power, Eays cites only three specific instances of this occurring from 1932 to 1935 (p. 67).

prepared to replace it. Defence Scheme No. 2 covered the defence of Canada against Japan and was expanded as the Japanese threat grew throughout the 1930's. Defence Scheme No. 3 was a mobilization plan "for a force intended for expeditionary purposes commencing with one Division plus one Army co-operation Squadron, R.C.A.F."³⁹ Further provision was to be made for the sending of four to six such divisions. Begun under General MacBrien in 1927, the plan was completed with certain modifications in 1932 at which time it received the official approval of the Minister of Defence, then D. M. Sutherland. A final Defence Scheme, No. 4, was begun soon after to cover the dispatching of Canadian troops to meet a "Minor Empire Crisis". By this time, however, those who understood the attitude of the Canadian people and their governments realized that the responsibility for defence of the "dependent Empire" and of India rested with Great Britain alone.⁴⁰ Defence Scheme No. 4, therefore, never passed beyond the draft stage. X

General McNaughton had had an important part in the preparation of Defence Scheme No. 3 and during his tenure as C.G.S. from 1930 to 1935 the plan was given first priority. Maurice Pope, then a staff officer with Operations, recalls:

³⁹Memorandum by Chief of Staff, Department of National Defence, for Director of Military Operations and Intelligence, 14 Oct., 1926. Army Records (S.3067, I); as quoted in Eayrs, op. cit., (Vol. I).

⁴⁰Lieutenant C. P. Stacey, "Canadian Defence Quarterly, Essay Competition, 1930, Prize Essay," C. D. Q., Vol. VIII, No. 3, April 1931, p. 309.

Of steadily increasing importance was "Defence Scheme No. 3", . . . General McNaughton's comprehensive plan providing for the mobilization of the coastal garrisons, the allocation of troops for internal security, and, so as to be prepared for any eventuality, the organization and mobilization of a field force; in its last revise the latter consisted of an army corps of two divisions with the necessary complement of ancillary units. While this force might be held for service at home there was no doubt in our minds that in the coming war with Germany the Government of the day would decide on its dispatch overseas.⁴¹

Another of McNaughton's projects was the reorganization of the N.P.A.M. As has already been mentioned, the post-war paper strength of the Militia had been set at eleven infantry and four cavalry divisions, at that time presumably the maximum that could be mobilized and maintained for a war fought within Canadian borders.⁴² The idea of war within the country having been replaced by 1932 with the idea of an overseas war involving smaller expeditionary forces, McNaughton proposed to reduce the paper strength by over half, to six infantry divisions and one cavalry division. Although the Defence Associations at first protested any reorganization which would involve the disbandment of existing regiments,⁴³ the Department of National Defence in 1932 resolved to go ahead with the program in the interests of economy and efficiency, amalgamating redundant regiments wherever possible.

⁴¹ Maurice Pope, Soldiers and Politicians, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1962, p. 93.

⁴² Ibid., p. 82.

⁴³ See, for example, Canadian Infantry Association, Proceedings of the Annual Meeting, 1933, p. 102.

The argument of efficiency was as pressing as that of economy for " . . . not only was the existing establishment far too large, it was also dangerously unbalanced, with too many infantry and cavalry units and not sufficient artillery, engineers and other supporting arms and services."⁴⁴ Involved with the problem of efficiency was the problem of equipment. Reducing the size of the N.P.A.M. would spread equipment a little more thickly, but much of it was worn out or obsolete and there were still frightening shortages, as McNaughton noted in a specially prepared memorandum circulated among Cabinet members in May, 1935:

As regards reserves of equipment and ammunition, the matter is shortly disposed of. Except as regards rifles and rifle ammunition, partial stocks of which were inherited from the Great War--there are none.

As regards equipment, the situation is almost equally serious, and to exemplify it I select a few items from the long list of deficiencies on file at N.D.H.Q.:

- (i) There is not a single modern anti-aircraft gun of any sort in Canada.
- (ii) The stocks of field gun ammunition on hand represents 90 minutes' fire at normal rates for the field guns inherited from the Great War and which are now obsolescent.
- (iii) The coast defence armament is obsolete and, in some cases, defective in that a number of the major guns are not expected to be able to fire more than a dozen rounds. To keep some defence value in these guns, which are situated on the Pacific Coast, we have not dared for some years to indulge in any practice firing.
- (iv) About the only article of which stocks are held is harness, and this is practically useless. . . .

⁴⁴Goodspeed, Battle Royal, p. 343.

The situation as generally outlined above with respect to equipment and ammunition is one that can be viewed only with the gravest concern. And with the rapidly deteriorating international situation the position is becoming more and more disquieting. . . .⁴⁵

Britain had already begun to rearm in 1934, but Canada was not to follow suit until 1936-37, and even then she had not time to equip her forces properly before war came. In the words of the Official Historian of the Canadian Army:

Had Canadian governments accepted the recommendations of their military advisors which three successive administrations felt themselves unable to entertain, the Canadian land forces in the Second World War could have been armed with modern weapons from the outset. As it was, they made do for many months with the equipment of 1918.⁴⁶

One wonders what would have happened to Canada's soldiers if they had not had the respite afforded by the "Phony War" and Hitler's failure to invade Britain.

During the Depression, the problem of training was complicated by factors other than a shortage of funds. With the coming of mechanization, concepts of warfare were rapidly changing, necessitating changes in training. In the cavalry, the question of armoured vehicles as against horses was slowly being decided in favour of armour. George Pearkes recalls being visited at R.M.C. by Canadian armour enthusiast

⁴⁵"The Defence of Canada," Memorandum by McNaughton, 5 April, 1935 (revised 28 May, 1935), McNaughton Papers (112.3M 2009.D7). Quoted in Eays, op. cit., (Vol. I), p. 318-319.

⁴⁶C. P. Stacey, Six Years of War, Ottawa, Queen's Printer, 1955, p. 22.

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Major H. T. Goodeve, who gave the cadets a demonstration of how to ambush an armoured car convoy.⁴⁷ In the Canadian Defence Quarterly of October, 1933, Lt-Col. H. T. G. Letson admitted that the shortage of funds made mechanization almost impossible. He suggested, however, that because future mechanization would demand more highly skilled officers, a special Militia Staff Course should be given in the subject alternating years with the regular course.⁴⁸

Frequently, officers expressed opinions on military training problems. C. P. Stacey recommended the formation of a special "First Line Group" of N.P.A.M. units for membership in which the various Militia units would compete on the basis of efficiency.⁴⁹ Lt-Col. Letson agreed, suggesting a division or at least a brigade for rapid mobilization and dispatch, the personnel of which should have the opportunity of training together at least once every four years.⁵⁰ In 1934 and 1935 the Canadian Infantry Association formally presented such a plan to the Department of National Defence, calling for quadrennial brigade group collective training in each Military District. Naturally the Department's reply was that money was too scarce to permit anything beyond

⁴⁷R. H. Roy, Pearkes Interviews, No. 22, 11.1.66, p. 14-15.

⁴⁸Lt-Col. H. F. G. Letson, "Canadian Defence Quarterly Essay Competition, 1933, 'The Influence of Mechanization and Motorization on the Organization and Training of the Non-Permanent Active Militia'." C. D. Q., Vol. XI, No. 1, October 1933, p. 16-38.

⁴⁹Stacey, "C. D. Q. Prize Essay, ", p. 315.

⁵⁰Letson, op. cit.

exercises without troops.⁵¹ The matter of collective training was actually of immense significance, for (from the Great War until 1938 Canada's senior officers had never been able to conduct exercises with troops at the brigade or divisional level.⁵² The entire Canadian officer training system was, in fact, geared to theoretical exercises without troops, an inexpensive but by no means fully satisfactory arrangement and yet another example of the frightening unpreparedness of the army for a real war.)

On January 1, 1935, following a three months' course at the Senior Officer's School, Sheerness, George Pearkes himself became Director of Military Training and Staff Duties.⁵³ Interestingly enough, he took a somewhat different view of the collective training idea to that held by the Canadian Infantry Association. Addressing that body at its 1935 meeting, he expressed his opposition to collective training until all the individual components of the larger formations were competent at their own levels. Noting the wide variations in the strengths of various units, Pearkes recommended that all units be trained at uniform establishment. As he pointed out, the object of Militia training

⁵¹ Canadian Infantry Association, Proceedings of the Annual Meeting, 1934, p. 55; 1935, p. 73.

⁵² An example of one 1938 brigade level exercise appears in Goodspeed's Battle Royal, p. 349.

⁵³ The Senior Officers School was another of the British officer training schools. A short course there was a prerequisite to assuming command of a regular battalion. At the time, Pearkes assumed he was being groomed either to assume command of a P.P.C.L.I. battalion or to become Director of Military Training. (R. H. Roy, Pearkes Interviews, No. 22, 11.1.66, p. 16).

was to establish cadres of trained soldiers from which complete units could rapidly be built up.

When N.P.A.M. units were to be expanded, the original peacetime nucleus of private soldiers and N.C.Os. would, on the basis of their training, become the new N.C.Os. and junior officers of the full strength units. If these nuclei were not more or less uniform in size, expansion would leave some units with a surplus of trained men while others had a shortage. In the interests of morale and efficiency, therefore, militiamen should be more evenly distributed throughout all units so that all would be capable of expansion at a uniform rate.⁵⁴

This concept was the opposite of Stacey's "First Line Group" idea, providing for a somewhat slower but more complete mobilization.

During the same address, Pearkes demonstrated his awareness of modern military trends by calling for a de-emphasizing of close order drill in favour of training to develop individual resourcefulness. In this he was anticipating a new fluid type of warfare in which small units and individuals would frequently be required to act alone on their own initiative. The Great War had proven infantry to be better adapted for defensive than for offensive fighting. To increase the offensive capability of infantrymen Pearkes suggested that heavier firepower should be provided in the form of mortars and more machine guns.⁵⁵

⁵⁴G. R. Pearkes, "The Modern Organization and Equipment of an Infantry Unit". Address in Canadian Infantry Association, Proceedings of the Annual Meeting, 1935, p. 46-51.

⁵⁵Ibid. At the time, each infantry battalion was equipped with only two .303 Vickers heavy machine guns, although the Infantry Association had requested in 1934 that this quantity should be doubled. (Proceedings of the Annual Meeting, 1934, p. 55).

As Pearkes later was to admit, however, it was one thing to know what to do but quite another thing to be able to do it. His chief difficulty as Director of Military Training was

. . . to do the amount of training which we thought was necessary and desirable with the little money that we had. That was the sole problem really . . . , to make the money go around.⁵⁶

It was a very depressing period. As I say, there was very little money for training purposes, although we had at the time the knowledge of the growth of the Hitler movement in Germany and by '37, why it was becoming quite obvious that another war was building up and yet there was very, very little money available for buying new equipment, buying equipment we urgently needed for training the personnel.⁵⁷

For the Canadian army, the Depression was a test of faith. As there was no direct military threat to Canada from 1931 to 1935, the government was certainly justified in neglecting military preparedness while it attempted to deal with the pressing economic problems of the country. The country simply could not spare the money so desperately needed by the armed forces to maintain an adequate skeleton establishment for future emergencies. Lacking government and public support but aware that developments in Germany, Italy and Japan would soon make an effective military force essential, Canadian servicemen frequently must have felt that the struggle for preparedness was a hopeless one. Indeed, the Great Depression was potentially more damaging to morale

⁵⁶R. H. Roy, Pearkes Interviews, No. 23, 1.2.66, p. 3.

⁵⁷Ibid., p. 6-7.

than a major wartime defeat, and the very fact that the spirit of the Canadian Permanent and Non-Permanent Militia did not fail them in the crisis was proof that they had in generous measure that esprit de corps and sense of duty which is the real foundation of any army.

GILBERTSON

25/1/1941

CHAPTER V

THE STRUGGLE TOWARDS REARMAMENT

1936 TO 1939

The Ethiopian crisis of 1935 had proved conclusively that the League of Nations was incapable of guaranteeing collective security. The events of the next four years made it unmistakably clear that a second Great War was imminent. In March, 1936, the German army reoccupied the Rhineland. Three months later the Spanish Civil War began, providing a testing ground for German and Italian military tactics and equipment over the next two years. In March of 1938, Hitler annexed Austria, and later the same year Britain and France agreed at Munich to the German occupation of the Czechoslovakian Sudetenland. If anyone still doubted the reality of the German menace to Europe, all such doubts were dispelled in March 1939 by the Nazi seizure of the rest of Czechoslovakia in complete defiance of the Munich agreement.

Until the spring of 1939, Government and public opinion in both Britain and Canada was inclined to be cautiously optimistic in spite of the deteriorating international situation. Still harbouring feelings of guilt over the harsher clauses of the Treaty of Versailles, Britain was prepared to excuse German rearmament, the remilitarization of the Rhineland, the Anschluss with Austria and even the annexation of the German-speaking Sudetenland. The British government and people were desperate to avoid the horrible course of going to war as long as it could be

argued that Germany had at least some right on her side. Neville Chamberlain spoke for most of his countrymen when, on the eve of Munich, he said:

How horrible, fantastic, incredible it is that we should be digging trenches and fitting gas masks because of a quarrel in a far away country. . . . However much one may sympathize with a small nation confronted with a big and powerful nation, we cannot in all circumstances undertake to involve the whole British Empire in a war simply on that account. If we have to fight, it must be on larger issues than that.¹

Chamberlain's words were even more appropriate to Canada than they were to Britain. As Ernest Lapointe emphasized in a communication to Mackenzie King shortly before Munich: "Immediate cause of war namely minority problems in Central Europe not of a nature to enthuse our people."² Canada, in fact, had her own minority problem. King realized that pro-British sentiment among the majority of Canadians would force his government to go to war if Britain herself were threatened.³ He also understood that, unless he could convince French Canada that a war was primarily for Canadian interests, any public commitment he made to support Britain in a war would lose him the confidence of French Canadians throughout the country. In addition to recognizing war's

¹ Neville Chamberlain in a radio address, 27 September, 1938, as quoted in James Eayrs, In Defence of Canada: Appeasement and Rearmament (Vol. II), Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1965, p. 69.

² Ernest Lapointe to King, 28 September, 1938, Lapointe Papers; as quoted in Eayrs, op. cit., (Vol II), p. 68.

³ At his meeting with Hitler in June of 1937 he had warned that in the event of "a war of aggression, nothing in the world would keep the Canadian people from being at the side of Britain." H. of C. Debates, 1944, p. 6275; as quoted in Eayrs, op. cit., (Vol. II), p. 56 footnote.

threat to national unity, however, King had an equally compelling personal reason for seeking to preserve peace at almost any price.

As Bruce Hutchison has observed:

He was trying to postpone war if he could and to deny to the people, and above all to himself, that war would come. The secret of his whole behavior in international affairs from the autumn of 1935 on to 1939 is to be found in the simple human fact that he feared war and could not face it until he had no alternative. The intuitive reason, as always, was the real reason. The public and semipublic reasons were only props of argument for a decision made by instinct, in this case the instinctive horror of bloodshed.⁴

With such strong pacifistic sentiments, King was tormented by the realization that he as Prime Minister was powerless to interrupt the chain of events that would draw Canada into a war. He also hated the idea that war was certain to create conditions over which he would have no political control and which could destroy the carefully engineered policies that he had so diligently developed and maintained since the Great War.⁵

As a consequence of these attitudes, King's foreign policy in the years 1936 to 1939 was unmistakably non-committal. Before Parliament in February, 1937, he quoted approvingly a concise analysis of this policy as presented by Escott Reid in the Toronto Quarterly:

⁴ Bruce Hutchison, The Incredible Canadian, Toronto, Longman's Green and Co., 1953, p. 207.

⁵ The most unpleasant realization of his fears was, of course, the Conscription Crisis of 1944.

Mr. King's foreign policy as declared from his statements and actions since his reassuming office on October 23, 1935, can be summarized as follows:

1. The guiding principle in the formulation of Canada's foreign policy should be the maintenance of the unity of Canada as a nation.
2. Canada's foreign policy is, in the main, not a matter of Canada's relations to the league but of Canada's relations to the United Kingdom and the United States.
3. Canada should, as a general rule occupy a back seat at Geneva or elsewhere when European or Asiatic problems are being discussed.
4. Canada is under no obligation to participate in the military sanctions or in the defence of any other part of the Commonwealth.
5. Canada is under no obligation to participate in the economic sanctions of the league.
6. Before the Canadian government agrees in future to participate in military or economic sanctions or in the war [sic], the approval of the parliament or people of Canada will be secured.
7. Canada is willing to participate in international inquiries into international economic grievances.⁶

If anything, King's statement indicated an even greater swing towards isolationism than had been evident before 1935. Certainly his conduct in foreign affairs after this date was that of a man fearful to take out insurance on his house because to do so would be an admission that it was no longer fire-proof. Searching for ways of allaying the war fears of French Canada, Mackenzie King became a stronger exponent of appeasement than Neville Chamberlain. The autumn of 1936 saw him in Geneva, defending the potential for peaceful conciliation still supposedly inherent in the dying League of Nations. In March, 1937, he

⁶Quoted by Prime Minister W. L. Mackenzie King in H. of C. Debates, February 19, 1937. Reprinted in the Canadian Defence Quarterly, Vol. XV, No. 2, January 1938, p. 142.

sought President Roosevelt's intervention " . . . to effect an appeasement of conditions in Europe by lending good offices toward that end."⁷ Visiting Berlin in June, 1937, King was "deeply impressed" with Hitler, concluding in a masterpiece of wishful thinking " . . . that the Germans are not contemplating war, either with France or with Britain."⁸ At the Imperial Conference in summer, 1937, he refused to commit Canada to any plans for joint Imperial defence and, against the strong objections of M. J. Savage of New Zealand, he held out firmly for a policy of appeasement in Europe. With great enthusiasm and inward relief he acclaimed the Munich settlement of 1938, for it spared him the necessity of asking Canada to go to war in support of Britain before Canadian opinion was united on the need for war. "The justification of Munich, he believed in retrospect, was that it provided the time needed to make the issues clear."⁹

Mackenzie King's obsession for national unity confounded exponents of Canadian military preparedness at every turn. For the armed forces, one of the most frustrating aspects of King's quest for peace was his suspicion of any Canadian involvement in overall Imperial defence planning. An outstanding example of this problem was the Prime Minister's consternation over the so-called "liaison letters".

⁷ King to Tweedsmuir, March 15, 1937, King Papers; as quoted in Eayrs, op. cit., (Vol. II), p. 43.

⁸ King to Tweedsmuir, July 10, 1937, King Papers; as quoted in ibid., p. 46.

⁹ Eayrs, op. cit., (Vol. II), p. 71.

One of the benefits of the Canadian army's close association with the British army was the direct exchange of intelligence and general military information by letter between the Chief of Staff in each of the Dominions and their Imperial counterpart in Whitehall. Although Canada could relay only very limited information to Britain, she received almost all that Britain and the Empire had to offer. After 1934, George Pearkes in his capacity as Director of Military Training had access to these communications. He recalls:

. . . They were passed round to me to read so that we could keep our training more or less along the same lines as the British training. . . . And then another thing which was laid down, . . . [was that] the War Office estimated certain scales of attack; that is, what sort of attack might be made on Esquimalt, what sort of an attack might be made on Halifax. . . . That was a guide to us [from the Imperial Committee of Defence] as to what garrison should be available and in the mobilization, what might be expected and required to meet those contingencies. We accepted those scales of attack as being a considered opinion which we should take cognizance of and be guided by.¹⁰

To the few Canadian officers privileged to view the various liaison letters, they were of the utmost value. (As the government had never permitted the appointment of military attachés to any of its diplomatic missions abroad, the letters were the Canadian armed forces' only regular source of international intelligence.¹¹)

To the militant Canadian nationalists who knew of their existence but not their contents, the letters appeared to be a means by which the armed forces of Canada and Britain could initiate military

¹⁰R. H. Roy, Pearkes Interviews, No. 23, 1.2.66, p. 4.

¹¹In spite of the urgings of the War Office for a Canadian attaché in London and of Vincent Massey for one in Washington, the government did not appoint its first official military attaché until 1940. Eays, op. cit., (Vol. I), p. 93.

policy without being subject to government surveillance.) During the 1930's the Canadian Institute of International Affairs were highly critical of the liaison letters. "Many of the members were of the opinion that, while direct communications on routine matters might be desirable, all communications involving defence policy should pass through the hands of the Department of External Affairs so that the civil authorities should be kept fully informed of all preparations and understandings."¹² Although the Canadian army expressed its willingness to share its intelligence with the various government departments, no further developments occurred until 1937. In that year, the Chiefs of Staff Sub-Committee of the Committee of Imperial Defence circulated through the liaison channels a number of suggestions as to how each dominion could best co-operate with Britain in preparing the Empire for hypothetical (though probable) wars with Germany, Italy and Japan.

Prompted by his anti-British Under Secretary for External Affairs, O. D. Skelton, Mackenzie King took violent exception to having the military of a foreign country recommend a foreign policy for Canada over the head of her own External Affairs Department. [An investigation by Mr. Mackenzie revealed that many of the earlier liaison letters, especially those of Major-General McNaughton, exhibited a tendency to

¹²F. R. Scott, "The Collective System," Report of the First Study Conference, Canadian Institute of International Affairs, Montreal, 19-20 May, 1934, p. 12; as quoted in Eayrs, In Defence of Canada, (Vol. I), p. 92.

assume that a Canadian expeditionary force would be sent overseas in the event of war. Although a logical enough assumption from a realistic point of view, this was heresy against King's jealously protected policy of no prior commitments. The judgement of the Cabinet was that the liaison letters must be channelled in future through the Department of External Affairs.¹³

When King could suddenly raise such a row about a routine military liaison system which had been operating in the same way since 1910, his position on defence at the Imperial Conference later in 1937 should have come as no surprise. Yet one cannot help but marvel at the sensitivity of the man who, especially in the light of the rapidly worsening international situation, could find fault with every paragraph of the British draft report of the Conference. King did not rest until he had eliminated from the report any hint of Canadian dependence on Britain in defence matters and modified every "word, phrase, clause, sentence and paragraph" that "would arouse suspicions in Canada of agreements and commitments."¹⁴ The document that was eventually released by the Conference inevitably was a reflection of the Canadian position. What had been intended, at least by Britain, Australia and New Zealand, to be an important step toward unified Imperial planning for the

¹³ For a detailed account of the liaison letters see Eayrs, *op. cit.*, (Vol. I), p. 92, and (Vol. II), p. 82-83

¹⁴ From Mackenzie King's Diary, as quoted in Eayrs, *op. cit.*, (Vol. II), p. 89.

impending war had been whittled down by Mackenzie King into a mild and indefinite statement of "cooperation if necessary, but not necessarily cooperation."

On the domestic front, meanwhile, the Prime Minister had reluctantly accepted the necessity of rearmament. Under the King rationale, however, Canada was presented as a peaceful nation arming only to protect her neutrality and her coasts.¹⁵ Even under this guise, rearmament did not begin until two years after the King government regained office because the Cabinet, ". . . with the European situation as it stood at the time felt it would be unwise to arouse discussion in this House on matters of defence, especially when there was the possibility that our action would have been entirely misunderstood by other countries as well as our own."¹⁶ On May 19, 1936, the Minister of Defence, the Hon. Ian Mackenzie (Liberal, Vancouver Centre) confessed: "In the last few years, as a result of economic necessity and the stringency of the times, our defence forces have been to a certain extent inevitably neglected, and a very modest attempt is being made this year to get at least an efficient force."¹⁷ In view of the pitiful state of the forces and the resistance of Mackenzie King, getting an efficient force was doomed to

¹⁵ Eayrs, op. cit., (Vol. II), p. 139, 140.

¹⁶ H. of C. Debates, 1937, p. 1142-1143; as quoted in Eayrs, op. cit., (Vol. II), p. 136.

¹⁷ H. of C. Debates, May 19, 1936, p. 2980.

be a task requiring more than "very modest" attempts. The army also began the race with the handicap of having the lowest priority among the three services.¹⁸

In 1935, the army estimates had already been increased by almost \$2 million over the preceding year's all-time low of the century. For 1936, the army received \$12,483,000, the bulk of which was channelled into the Permanent Force and the vital general stores vote. Perhaps as a result of General McNaughton's revelations of the previous year, \$464,270, the largest single vote under general stores, went to artillery stores. In spite of a small reduction in the N.P.A.M. vote, provision was made for ten to twelve days of camp training, including some time at local headquarters camps.¹⁹

The highlight of the year's defence debates was the Minister's official announcement of the N.P.A.M. reorganization, which involved a reduction in the peacetime paper establishment from 135,000 to 90,000.²⁰

Under the reorganization, 135 infantry and machine gun battalions were reduced to 91, of which six were tank battalions. Thirty-five cavalry regiments were reduced to 20, of which four were armoured car units. By the conversion of surplus cavalry and infantry, the artillery was greatly expanded, as was the engineer corps.²¹

Signals, Service, Medical, Ordnance, Veterinary and Postal Corps also underwent complete reorganization and the entire process was not completed

¹⁸ Eayrs, *op. cit.*, (Vol. II), p. 140.

¹⁹ *H. of C. Debates*, May 19, 1936, p. 2992.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 2992-2993.

²¹ D. J. Goodspeed, *The Armed Forces of Canada, 1867-1967*, Ottawa, Queen's Printer, 1967, p. 95.

until 1939.²² Also in 1936, a cabinet defence committee was formed, consisting of King, Lapointe and Mackenzie. Intended to reflect the importance attached to defence matters, the committee fulfilled its function faithfully, for it met only occasionally prior to the war.

By 1938, it was obvious that the Canadian government could no longer avoid considering the possibility of conflict. Members of Parliament spoke for the first time about an attack on Canada as a real possibility even though they continued to imply that Canada need not become involved in a European war.²³ (The 1937 army vote leaped to \$19,156,000, the highest since the Great War and over twice the amount annually voted during the Depression.) On the somewhat ludicrous pretext that an impending war between the United States and Japan would require Canada to defend her neutrality against both powers, the Pacific Coast received priority for defence construction. Out of an Engineer Services and Works estimate of \$2,816,950, one third went " . . . for the first stage of construction of emplacements, power house, et cetera, in the vicinity of Esquimalt, Victoria, Vancouver, off Johnstone Strait and off Prince Rupert."²⁴ In 1938, a like sum, \$895,000, was assigned to further the work.

(The N.P.A.M. vote was increased by \$200,000 in 1937 " . . . to provide for nine days additional training for N.P.A.M. anti-aircraft

²²D. J. Goodspeed, The Armed Forces of Canada, 1867-1967, Ottawa, Queen's Printer, 1967, p. 95.

²³H. of C. Debates, February 22, 1937.

²⁴Mr. Mackenzie, ibid., p. 1100.

batteries, coast defence batteries, engineer fortrees companies and fortress signal companies and two days additional training for cavalry, infantry and services."²⁵ Here was further evidence of the government's new emphasis, for coast defence personnel now received 21 days training, while all other units, including the favoured artillery, received at most 12 days. Again in 1938, more money was allotted to the Non-Permanent Militia, this time to increase infantry training by two days. After the lean years of the Depression, such generosity might have been thought to result in an embarrassment of riches, yet this was anything but the case. During the 1938 session, the Minister agreed fully with his Conservative predecessor, the Hon. Grote Stirling (Conservative, Yale) that further money could be put to use.²⁶

Even though money was still pitifully short considering the job to be done, the armed forces could be heartened by a steady increase in public acceptance of rearmament. (After 1936) the Cadet Services vote dropped to only \$140,000,²⁷ and although Agnes Macphail moved her annual reductions to \$1.00,²⁸ (the government was no longer on the defensive.) Mackenzie King was able to announce that the Canadian Legion had thrown its considerable reputation and influence behind the rearmament policy of his administration. A Legion resolution sent him on January 30, 1937

²⁵ Mr. Mackenzie, H. of C. Debates, February 22, 1937.

²⁶ H. of C. Debates, May 16, 1938, p. 2910-2911.

²⁷ See Appendix I, this paper.

²⁸ H. of C. Debates, May 19, 1936, p. 2892; February 22, 1937, p. 1090.

concluded:

(6) That . . . we endorse the proposals of the government to increase our national defences and trust that such defences may be developed along the lines suggested, to make our coast secure from attack by sea, land and air, and to preserve our position as an independent nation which does not seek to interfere with the rights of any other nation but only to develop its national life in a world where peace should prevail.²⁹

The Legion's support was important, both because it represented a good cross section of Canadian public opinion and because its stand could influence the attitudes of the Canadian people as a whole. Although it was likely that the Legion had been urging for some years that more attention be paid to defence, this occasion was significant as the first time that the government had chosen to acknowledge publicly any such Legion recommendation.

Throughout the 1937 National Defence debates, the predominant feeling in Parliament supported increased defence expenditures.³⁰ Even most French Canadian members admitted the need for greater military strength, on the understanding that it was necessary to protect Canadian neutrality and to defend her coasts against attack in the event of war. Generally, only members of the recently formed Co-operative Commonwealth Federation party continued to insist that no greater military preparedness was necessary. C. G. MacNeil (C.C.F, Vancouver North) observed

²⁹Included in Mackenzie King's address on national defence, H. of C. Debates, February 19, 1937; as quoted in Canadian Defence Quarterly, Vol. XV, No. 2, January, 1938, p. 143-144.

³⁰See especially H. of C. Debates, February 16, 1937.

that no power was likely to attack Canada for fear of involving the United States, and that in any case, if Canada were invaded on a serious scale, her defences would be inadequate to offer effective resistance.³¹

M. J. Coldwell (C.C.F, Rosetown-Bigger, S.) attempted to split off the Liberal government's French Canadian support by suggesting that the strengthened defences implied commitments, an allegation hotly denied by Mr. King. The Prime Minister did, however, see fit to conclude his remarks on defence with what he considered to be a daring statement:

. . . I hope it will not be thought that because we have laid emphasis on what we are doing for Canada, we are not thereby making some contribution towards the defence of the British Commonwealth of Nations as a whole, or that we are not making some contribution towards the defence of all English-speaking communities, that we are not making some contribution towards the defence of all democracies, that we are not making some contribution towards the defence of all those countries that may some day necessarily associate themselves together for the purpose of preserving their liberties and freedom against an aggressor, come from wherever he may.³²

To condition the public for the worst after Hitler's rape of Czechoslovakia in March, 1939, Mr. Mackenzie solemnly pointed out to the Commons that in any major war involving Britain, Canada could not remain neutral. In convincing the French Canadian population of this fact he quoted his party's Quebec lieutenant, Justice Minister Ernest Lapointe:

³¹ H. of C. Debates, February 15, 1937.

³² H. of C. Debates, February 19, 1937, p. 1142-1151.

Can . . . an attitude of impartiality be possible in Canada during a war in our present international situation? A neutral state . . . would have to intern British troops or war vessels. I ask any one of my fellow countrymen whether they believe seriously that this could be done without a civil war in Canada. A neutralist state would have to possess forces sufficient to deter any belligerent power from violating these neutrality rights which Canada would have to uphold even against Britain if it were neutral.³³

The Minister of Defence went on to say that "any war in which Canada may become engaged will be in association with other great powers whom she will be supporting and by whom she will be supported."³⁴ Explaining the role of the land forces in a future war, Mr. Mackenzie enumerated their duties in home defence but concluded with the somewhat vague announcement that they could be required, ". . . should the eventualities of intensive conflict necessitate it, for the fundamental protection of Canadian institutions and Canadian ideals."³⁵ This last point could be taken to mean that the government once again was prepared to dispatch a Canadian Expeditionary Force to fight in Europe, not this time in the name of King and Country which had so offended French Canada, but rather for "national principles."

The government had already brought itself to acknowledge that possibly a war was coming and had found the courage to intimate that in

³³ Mr. Lapointe, H. of C. Debates, 1939, p. 2467; as quoted by Mr. Mackenzie on April 26, 1939, p. 3234.

³⁴ H. of C. Debates, April 26, 1939, p. 3235.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 3263.

such a war, Canada would fight beside Britain. The outstanding problem now was that the country possessed very little with which to fight. When challenged to explain why there had been no cut in equipment costs to parallel the reorganizational reductions in N.P.A.M. personnel, Mr. Mackenzie replied: "There was no equipment to speak of before. . . . What equipment we had was largely obsolete and we are endeavouring to get some modern guns and machine guns, and other things necessary for an effective and efficient militia force in the Dominion."³⁶

Even in the years after the Great War, the army had not had sufficient materiel to meet all its needs. As time passed, disinterested governments had only supplied enough money to replace equipment depleted by ordinary wear and tear, and during the Depression even this practice had been suspended. By the late 1930's, therefore, the vast bulk of Canadian military equipment was of obsolete Great War vintage and in addition much of this was badly worn.³⁷ Pressing equipment requirements easily swallowed up the considerable increases in defence expenditures after 1937 without allowing more than token increases in the Permanent and Non-Permanent Militia votes.³⁸

One might assume that the deficiencies in equipment could be remedied by large annual expenditures, but this solution proved to be

³⁶ H. of C. Debates, May 16, 1938, p. 2906.

³⁷ See McNaughton's 1935 report, mentioned on p. 99 of this paper.

³⁸ See Appendix I, this paper.

unattainable. In the first place, the King government was determined to hold defence expenditures to a level acceptable to the taxpayers, with the result that the Joint Staff Committee's³⁹ recommended estimates were cut by almost half in the first year of a proposed three year program. The government even went so far in 1938 as to transfer two million dollars of a four million dollar army equipment and ammunition vote into higher priority naval construction.⁴⁰ A second serious obstacle to re-equipment was that, even with sufficient money, it was difficult to obtain modern weapons. Canada's traditional dependence on Britain for the major weapons of war now became a headache and a hazard, as Major-General McNaughton had predicted it would several years earlier.⁴¹ Sure to feel the shock of battle before Canada, Britain needed for herself all the armaments she could produce. As Hitler's actions grew ever more menacing, Canadian orders placed in Britain for essential anti-aircraft guns, heavy ordnance and tanks remained unfilled. Having to wait indefinitely for British-supplied weapons and unable to obtain its needs from the extremely limited domestic defence industry, the Canadian army was forced to rely upon such equipment as obsolete Lewis guns, a few

³⁹The Joint Staff Committee comprised the chiefs of the three armed services. It was renamed the Chiefs of Staff Committee in January, 1939.

⁴⁰Eayrs, op. cit., (Vol. II), p. 152.

⁴¹See Eayrs, op. cit., (Vol. I), p. 313-315.

Vickers guns and armoured cars instead of tanks in the six tank battalions.⁴²

The obvious solution to Canada's equipment problems was to build up as rapidly as possible a domestic armaments industry capable of meeting her own needs and some of Britain's, as had been recommended in the controversial liaison letter of March, 1937, from the Chiefs of Staff Sub-Committee of the Imperial Defence Committee.⁴³ Here again, however, a large stumbling block existed in the form of Mackenzie King's sensitivity on defence matters. The idea that Canada should encourage "merchants of death" to set up businesses on her own soil was naturally offensive to King and to his advisor O. D. Skelton. What made the plan even less acceptable were the possible commitments arising out of Canada's establishment of large defence industries. As Skelton saw it:

. . . Participation by agreement with the U.K. Government in peace time commits us to participation in war because of claims of honour, creation of vested interests in such trade, and developing staff conversations. . . . Possibility of large war profits would produce a war mentality. . . .

⁴²The possibility of turning to the United States for war material was not really feasible at this time owing to the complete lack of any standardization between the two armies. As the Second World War progressed, however, the U.S., Britain and Canada moved toward a co-ordination of defence production. After 1946, closer economic and military ties between Canada and the United States led toward the eventual standardization of armed forces material between the two countries.

⁴³See above, p. 112.

. . . Are we to seek this trade just when other countries are realizing its danger and sacrificing profit and old doctrines of prestige to avoid it?⁴⁴

Impressed by these arguments but aware of the necessity of armaments production, King accepted a compromise by which government arsenals would receive priority in any expansion of Canada's munitions capacity. Private industries were to receive regulation and co-operation from the government but, in theory at least, they would be given no assistance in obtaining overseas contracts.⁴⁵ The Canadian government's general reluctance to support private Canadian munitions bids abroad soon led the British government to conclude that Mr. King would rather it did not place orders in Canada. In any case, as British dollar reserves were limited and a long war did not at first seem likely, the British government preferred to award contracts to British industrialists as long as these had the capacity to handle them. Before Britain's "darkest hour" in the autumn of 1940, Canadian industry had made only relatively small contributions to British rearmament. So little had in fact been done to set up an armament industry that the peak of Canadian

⁴⁴O. D. Skelton in a memorandum to King; as quoted in Eayrs, op. cit., (Vol. II), p. 118.

⁴⁵In practice, the Defence Department in 1937 pressured the British government to place an order with the John Inglis Company for 5000 Bren guns. When this fact became public a scandal resulted which prompted a full scale investigation of the contract by Royal Commission. As a result of this affair, King became even more determined that the government must hold itself aloof from all private defence contract negotiations abroad. [See Eayrs, op. cit., (Vol. II), p. 119-123.]

war production was not reached until 1943.⁴⁶ Viewing the pitifully small Canadian defence industry in the years before 1939, few people could have foreseen that, before the end of the Second World War, Canada would become one of the Grand Alliance's chief suppliers of weapons, from aircraft and tanks down to small arms.

Although defence expenditures increased as the danger of war grew, they were far short of what the armed forces considered to be their requirements. The Joint Staff Committee had originally called for an almost \$200,000,000 program spread over the three years from 1937 to 1939 inclusive. Unfortunately, the program suffered considerably from the government's cautious approach to defence spending. In spite of the fact that the overall armed forces estimates for 1938-39 were the same as those of 1937-38 at roughly \$36,200,000, the army estimates lost four million dollars from the previous year's figure owing to a naval priority on destroyer building. In the 1939-40 estimates, the situation changed radically for the better, perhaps under the stimulus of the Czechoslovakian crisis of 1938-39. Total appropriations soared to \$64,666,000, of which the army received \$21,837,000.⁴⁷ Too late to be of much use in the autumn mobilization, the increases were nevertheless beneficial to the units which began to go overseas in the winter of 1939-40.

⁴⁶ C. P. Stacey, Six Years of War, Ottawa, Queen's Printer, 1955, p. 36.

⁴⁷ Figures from Canada Year Book, 1939, and from Stacey, Six Years of War, p. 11-13.

From the time of his appointment as Director of Military Training and Staff Duties at the beginning of 1935, George Pearkes was in the very thick of the army's struggle for preparedness. The Militia reorganization was perhaps the largest task facing Defence Headquarters and Pearkes recalls that he and Lt-Col. H. D. G. Crerar, the Director of Operations, "were the main moving spirits in the re-organization scheme."⁴⁸ They considered "that Canada would be called upon to supply at least two divisions when war broke and . . . had prepared . . . the composition of those two divisions with the names of commanders and staff officers all worked out," and these were reviewed constantly."⁴⁹ Apart from Permanent Force regiments which formed the core of the 1st Division,⁵⁰ units for these two divisions were chosen on the basis of their training strength and efficiency. So that the task of defence should be borne equally over all parts of the country, the order of battle of each division included units from every military district. As Director of Training, Pearkes knew the capabilities of these various units and was thus in a position to recommend changes from year to year to ensure that the first line divisions would always be composed of the best units at any given time.⁵¹ A similar system

⁴⁸ R. H. Roy, Pearkes Interviews, No. 24, 1.3.66, p. 3.

⁴⁹ Ibid., No. 23, 1.2.66, p. 9.

⁵⁰ Ibid., No. 25, 1.3.66, p. 2.

⁵¹ Ibid., No. 23, 1. 2.66, p. 9-10.

was applied to the creation on paper of a front line cavalry division, but this formation was discarded early in 1939 as the General Staff decided that there would be little scope for horsed cavalry either in Europe or for the direct defence of Canada.⁵²

During this time also, Lt-Col. Crerar produced an appreciation of Canadian defence problems and requirements for the Joint Staff Committee. Although merely a statement of the obvious, Crerar's memorandum was most useful, for it provided the government with a concise picture of the realities of Canadian defence, realities which were all too often obscured in clouds of non-committal verbiage.⁵³

For Pearkes and the four other officers in his Directorate, the next priority after the Militia reorganization was, of course, training. He recollects:

We were responsible for the training policy for all the militia of Canada and we had so much money. We had to prepare our estimates for training which would include the pay of the Militia personnel and everything. We had to set the schools [and] we had a good deal to do with the appointment of personnel to the various positions. . . . It was the Directorate of Training and Staff Duties and we were always consulted regarding the moves of general staff officers and people who were going to various appointments and we had to report on their training ability and their standard of training and while the moves were carried out under the Adjutant-General's branch, we were always consulted.⁵⁴

⁵² Stacey, Six Years of War, p. 31-32.

⁵³ Crerar's appreciation, contained in a memorandum by the Joint Staff Committee, Department of National Defence, 5 September, 1936 (Army Records) is quoted in Eayrs, op. cit., (Vol. II), p. 213-222.

⁵⁴ R. H. Roy, Pearkes Interviews, No. 23, 1.2.66, p. 2.

Recognizing from his own experience the value of higher staff training in Britain, Pearkes tried to send as many officers as funds would permit over to England for courses or on exchange.⁵⁵

The nature of the training policy developed by Pearkes was important, as it was the policy under which Canada's Second World War soldiers would be prepared for live combat. In an address on training before the 1936 Annual Meeting of the Canadian Infantry Association, Pearkes explained his approach:

. . . I do feel that in the Non-Permanent Active Militia we have to divide the training programme into three parts, each part being of equal importance. I suggest that the first of these three parts should consist of the development of the Militia spirit . . . [by] a certain amount of close order drill, ceremonial, Mess life, etc. The second part is the training of the individual man in such subjects as weapon training, both in the rifle and Light [sic] automatic, the application of fire, and Section Leading. The third part is tactical training. . . .

During the past year you have studied the role of the Infantry in the Attack and next year we shall consider the problems of the Defence. . . . We shall study the various aspects, such as the part of the Armoured Fighting Vehicle in Defence; Defence against a Surprise Attack and also the problem of how you can defend yourself against Gas.⁵⁶ . . . Also demonstrations of the Bren gun have been arranged . . . for next year. . . .

⁵⁵R. H. Roy, Pearkes Interviews, No. 23, 1.2.66, p. 5.

⁵⁶In his regimental history of the Royal Regiment of Canada, D. J. Goodspeed notes that "In the spring of 1938, for the first time since the war, respirator drill was included in the syllabus of training." (Regimental Archives; in D. J. Goodspeed, Battle Royal, Toronto, Charters Publishing Co., 1962, p. 348.)

There will be the Army Co-operation and Air Liaison Courses at Trenton this winter and I think they will be particularly valuable in forming close relations between the air and ground forces. . . .

. . . We should try to get unit training throughout the country on a uniform basis, just as we have a uniform system for qualifications. . . .⁵⁷

It was a tribute to Pearkes that the only real criticism of his training programme in general, and the Militia Staff Course in particular, was that they were too concentrated and extensive.⁵⁸ Apart from these considerations there was a general concensus of opinion among army critics on the matter of training. The concept of one or two "first line" divisions met with the general approval of the military, as indeed did the entire N.P.A.M. reorganization programme.⁵⁹ Mechanization was obviously on the way toward revolutionizing warfare, and one imaginative writer in the Canadian Defence Quarterly suggested that troops should be permitted, if necessary, to train with commercial vehicles for economy.⁶⁰ Indeed, in spite of the sharp upward trend in the defence estimates after 1936, the Militia with its low priority still lacked adequate funds

⁵⁷ (Brevet) Lieutenant-Colonel G. R. Pearkes in Canadian Infantry Association, Proceedings of the Annual Meeting, September 18 and 19, 1936, p. 49-50.

⁵⁸ Major M. A. Bell, "N.P.A.M. Training," C. D. Q., Vol. XVI, No. 1, October, 1938, p. 83-86, and Major M. Barry Watson, "The Advanced Militia Staff Course," ibid., p. 68-69.

⁵⁹ See, for example, M. A. Bell, op. cit., and Resolution 17 of the 1936 meeting of the Canadian Infantry Association (Proceedings of the Annual Meeting, 1936, p. 55).

⁶⁰ 'A. B. C.', "How to Train the Militia," C. D. Q., Vol. XVI, No. 2, 1939, p. 148-156.

and support to achieve true efficiency. At least the Militia regiments could once again attend summer camps and in the last year before the war some of the "first line" units, such as the Royal Regiment of Canada, were able to conduct collective training at the brigade level with units of the Permanent Force and with tanks.⁶¹

~~Shortages~~ Shortages of money were sharply reflected in the annual resolutions of the various Defence Associations and in the replies to these resolutions by the Department of National Defence. Throughout the late 1930's, the Infantry Association submitted various requests that the government provide funds sufficient to supply N.P.A.M. other ranks with underwear, with winter clothing where necessary, and above all with boots. The Department "could not see its way clear" to do so,⁶² nor could it cover the cost of so minor an item as tent floorboards for summer camps owing to an ammunition priority.⁶³ With such conditions prevailing, it is not surprising that many Canadian troops marched off to the Second World War with Great War uniforms and weapons.⁶⁴ A question put to the Canadian Infantry Association by Pearkes in 1936, when a \$100,000 expenditure was being discussed, typified the Hobson's choice facing the Militia: "Would you rather spend one hundred thousand

⁶¹ For the first time since the war, tanks were used in a supporting role in this exercise at Camp Borden in 1938. (Goodspeed, Battle Royal, p. 349.)

⁶² Canadian Infantry Association, Proceedings of the Annual Meetings, 1936-1938; quotations from p. 56 of 1936 Proceedings.

⁶³ Ibid., 1938, p. 120.

⁶⁴ R. H. Roy, Pearkes Interviews, No. 24, 1.3.66, p. 4.

dollars on boots or Bren guns?" The obvious answer was "both", but on the government's tight budget this was an impossibility.⁶⁵

Another requirement of the Militia even as late as 1939 was for the continuing support of government and business. As several officers pointed out in the Canadian Defence Quarterly, morale and enlistments in the Militia could both be raised if the government would exhort employers to encourage their men to join a regiment and permit them to go to camp without loss of pay or their regular holidays.⁶⁶ The Minister of Defence had already recognized this fact, and in 1938 had sent a circular letter to boards of trade and chambers of commerce appealing for the support of businesses in N.P.A.M. training.⁶⁷ In a number of other instances when Mr. Mackenzie made personal appeals to employers, as he did on behalf of the Black Watch at a dinner in Montreal in April, 1938, the effects were undoubtedly beneficial to the Militia.⁶⁸ Government appeals of this sort up to four years earlier would have brought down the wrath of organized labour, pacifist members of Parliament and the general public upon the hapless Minister. That they were accepted in 1938 was indicative of the heightened public awareness of the need for

⁶⁵ Canadian Infantry Association, Proceedings of the Annual Meeting, 1936, p. 21.

⁶⁶ Captain John R. Pratt, Captain H. F. Seymour and Lt-Col. A. S. Nops, "Difficulties of Training the Militia," C. D. Q., Vol. XVI, No. 3, April 1939, p. 340-346.

⁶⁷ H. of C. Debates, May 16, 1938, p. 2906-2909.

⁶⁸ Paul P. Hutchison, Canada's Black Watch, Montreal, T. H. Best, 1962, p. 180.

defence, an encouraging sign for the armed forces.

In December, 1936, George Pearkes received his third posting to a British military school. This time it was to be the Imperial Defence College, "the acme of all professional [military] education."⁶⁹ It would be difficult to over-stress the importance of these schools to the Canadian army. Their very existence emphasized the close familial relationship between the military arms of Britain and the Dominion that Mackenzie King sought so hard to de-emphasize at the 1937 Imperial Conference. Intended to meet the needs of the entire Empire, the schools were as much a part of the Canadian training system as they were of the British. The Imperial Defence College was the most exclusive of all these institutions, generally including only one Canadian in its annual enrollment of around twenty four.⁷⁰

As Pearkes put it, the purpose of the College was:

. . . to give officers who were likely to hold command during a war a general view of the world situation and [to get] officers of all three services with some civilians there as well to have the broadest possible outlook, and really . . . to prepare them to submit memoranda to governments on various problems and that sort of thing.⁷¹

For any Canadian officer, the year-long course at the Imperial Defence College was an invaluable experience. It broadened his view of strategy

⁶⁹ R. H. Roy, Pearkes Interviews, No. 24, 1.3.66, p. 13.

⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 16.

⁷¹ Ibid., p. 15.

and world affairs, increased his military knowledge, and introduced him to future military contacts throughout the Empire. For Pearkes, the year at the College was even more significant than usual, for it made him aware of the truly alarming world situation which remained veiled from those within Canada by Mackenzie King's unreal policy of no commitments. "There was a lot of confidential and perhaps secret information which was given to us at that time and I most certainly came away with the impression that there was no doubt that there was going to be war with Germany. I was convinced of that when I left England after that course."⁷²

Had the Canadian Prime Minister known in detail what Pearkes was doing at the College, he would doubtless have been horrified. The eventualities for which the Defence College syndicates were realistically planning included the very possibilities that King would not allow himself or the Canadian people to consider seriously--war with Japan, war with Germany and small wars within the Empire. Interestingly, in later Canadian actions, ". . . it was the considered opinion of everybody on the course that Hong Kong was indefensible and that there was no chance of being able to defend Hong Kong [until] a relieving force could reach it."⁷³ Although Munich was still a year away and British foreign policy was conciliatory toward Germany, the British government

⁷²R. H. Roy, Pearkes Interviews, No. 24, 1.3.66, p. 16.

⁷³Ibid., p. 15.

was making no attempt to conceal the fact that it had been rearming since 1934 in anticipation of war.⁷⁴ On this point, Pearkes must have felt frustration at the contrast with his own country which had deliberately delayed rearmament until 1937 out of consideration for the feelings of the aggressor nations.⁷⁵

In the summer break from the College, Pearkes went as an assistant umpire to the manoeuvres of the 1st and 2nd Divisions of the British army around Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire. Both the chief umpire and the 2nd Division commander were friends of his from Camberley days, a graphic illustration of the lasting links built up through the Imperial senior officer training system.⁷⁶ As the two divisions were experimenting with mechanization, Pearkes gained an insight into the problems of moving large numbers of vehicles in an orderly fashion. This experience was subsequently to be put to use in the Second World War when he found himself a divisional commander organizing motorized troop movements on the same narrow, congested English roads.⁷⁷

During his year in England, Pearkes received his promotion to Lieutenant-Colonel. In January, 1938, he returned to Canada with the

⁷⁴ Zayrs, In Defence of Canada, (Vol. I), p. 316.

⁷⁵ See p.114 this paper.

⁷⁶ Contemporaries of Pearkes at the Imperial Defence College who later distinguished themselves in the Second World War included General Sir Alan Cunningham, an 8th Army commander and British commander in East and Northeast Africa; Field Marshal Sir William Slim, a commander of British forces in Burma; and Captain "Hockey" Holland, the naval officer who delivered the British ultimatum to the French navy at Oran. R. H. Roy, Pearkes Interviews, No. 24, 1.3.66, p. 17-18.

⁷⁷ R. H. Roy, Pearkes Interviews, No. 24, 1.3.66, p. 16-18.

rank of full Colonel, Temporary Brigadier, to assume command of Military District 13 at Calgary. The wheel had turned full circle: Calgary, his first post in Canada after the Great War, was also to be his last post before another Great War. While at the Imperial Defence College, Pearkes had been required to give a lecture on the state of the Canadian army, and though he could take pride in the sacrifices that were made by its Non-Permanent officers and men, he realized only too clearly its parlous condition as a fighting force. His year abroad had graphically underlined the fact that Canada was still clinging to its fire-proof house mentality when all around it the world was ablaze with preparations for war. Pearkes, at least was now under no illusions: "I was convinced war was coming and I spared no effort . . . I don't know that I've ever worked harder than I did when I was there, trying to buck the militia up."⁷⁸

Once at Calgary, Pearkes threw himself into the task of preparing the Non-Permanent Militia in his district for the mobilization which sooner or later was bound to come. Having worked on the order of battle for mobilization while Director of Military Training, he knew which of his units had been designated for the first line divisions and paid particular attention to these. " . . . I made certain changes . . . in order to get a better distribution and I went round continually lecturing and visiting the different militia units and doing everything

⁷⁸R. H. Roy, Pearkes Interviews, No. 24, 1.3.66, p. 21.

I could to get them to a state of efficiency where I thought they could be. . . ."79 "They were given certain preferences in connection with vacancies for courses and that sort of thing."80 Although he could not be certain, Pearkes could assume that, with his war experience and higher training, he would be given command of one of the first line brigades upon mobilization, and this was itself an incentive to work even harder to prepare the troops.

In spite of the inadequacy of government defence preparations, Pearkes observed a number of hopeful signs that the army would be able to meet the coming test. The Lord Strathcona Horse were still mounted on horses, but symbolic of the motorized future, Cardon Lloyd machine gun carriers were on display at the Calgary armouries. In 1938 and 1939, more money was becoming available and more men were attending summer camps. The Royal Visit of 1939 also did much to increase interest in the Militia and to step up the pace of training.81 Of the 1939 Militia Staff Course, Pearkes recalls: ". . . we had gotten mechanized to the extent that we moved the syndicates round in cars and for that reason . . . and partly as a result of what I had learned at the Imperial Defence College, we had more movement."82 These signs were encouraging, but even more important was the tremendous assistance and support offered Pearkes

79 R. H. Roy, Pearkes Interviews, No. 25, 8.3.66, p. 15.

80 Ibid., p. 23.

81 Ibid., p. 16, 17, 18.

82 Ibid., p. 20.

by Premier Aberhart of Alberta:

Nobody could have cooperated more wholeheartedly with me than Aberhart and his government. . . . He realized the approaching danger . . . and he was prepared to give the military every encouragement. I remember I had certain dealings with his Minister of Lands, Mr. Tanner, at the time in which we wanted some area for mobilization. We wanted to have an internment camp because there were certain known . . . [potential enemy aliens] and we had to have a place where we could put them and I had made arrangements to take over a disused forestry camp at Kananaskis. . . . As I say, Mr. Aberhart's government was so willing to make this available for us and kept it quiet and even made some small preparations before the actual war broke out.⁸³

The long-expected war finally came in the autumn of 1939. As German threats against Poland became more menacing in late August, Britain reaffirmed her guarantee to Poland, given at the time of Hitler's annexation of Czechoslovakia in March. On August 25, all leave for Canadian Permanent Force soldiers was cancelled and the Military Districts were warned to adopt the precautionary stage of the mobilization plan covering war with Germany. Previously selected Militia units were called to place guards on "vulnerable points" and to man coast defence installations. On September 1, the German Army invaded Poland and the Canadian Cabinet, meeting in emergency session, ordered the mobilization of the two divisions of the Canadian Active Service Force. On September 7, Parliament assembled and three days later declared war on Germany.⁸⁴ Mackenzie King's nightmare had come to pass. This time, Canadians went to war with a sense of resignation.

⁸³R. H. Roy, Pearkes Interviews, No. 25, 8.3.66, p. 19-20.

⁸⁴Goodspeed, Battle Royal, p. 353, and the Canada Year Book, 1946.

As Pearkes observes:

. . . There was quite a difference in the mobilization for the Second War than the First. There was no great enthusiasm; people came in quietly and I remember one man coming and saying he wanted to join up, would it be all right if he waited for another couple of weeks so that he could get his harvest completed. . . . It was quite impressive the way of the response but there was no drum-beating and marching and waving of flags, not like the extraordinary enthusiasm that has been so frequently described [in connection with the First World War]. . . .⁸⁵

In spite of all its best efforts, neither the Permanent Force nor the N.P.A.M. was prepared. The increased expenditures of 1939 ironically included a Supplementary Estimate at last making provision for boots for the N.P.A.M., but this came too late to benefit most of the militiamen involved in the mobilization. As Pearkes recalls, there were many other serious deficiencies:

. . . There was no blank cheque to buy any sort of equipment at all. . . . We were terribly short of transport. We were short of Bren gun carriers; we were short of a lot of smaller items, binoculars and that sort of thing. . . . In fact it was rather frustrating getting the equipment; . . . it was all let by contract in the East. . . . Only just before we sailed did we get the battle dress. That was in December. . . . I can't remember that we had authority to buy blankets or anything like that. I think we had very, very little authority. . . . Everything was issued through quartermaster-general, ordinary branches.

. . . I remember my wife getting some ladies in the early stages together to get additional socks made and that sort of thing, because some of the men coming in

⁸⁵ R. H. Roy, Pearkes Interviews, No. 25, 8.3.66, p. 24-25.

had very little in the way of clothing. . . . Of course they were issued with the uniform stuff, but there was a shortage of underclothing. . . .⁸⁶

. . . I don't think Canadian officers learnt anything from the Spanish Civil War. I think that our training was based a good deal on 1918 methods of training with a little more open warfare training as we had been training for open warfare in 1918. But there was very little of the commando training done at the time and I think that it was pretty stereotyped. . . .⁸⁷

As the official historian of the Canadian Army summed up:

. . . When war broke out Canada had no troops ready for immediate action, except for local coastal defence against very small raids. The tiny Permanent Force did not constitute a striking force capable either of counter-attack against a major raid or of expeditionary action. The Non-Permanent Force, with its limited strength, obsolescent equipment and rudimentary training, was incapable of immediate effective action of any sort against a formidable enemy. The two forces together constituted a useful and indeed essential foundation upon which, over a period of months, an army could be built. They offered, however, no means for rapid intervention in an overseas theatre of operations. . . . The preparations were utterly inadequate by comparison with the scale of the coming emergency.⁸⁸

⁸⁶ R. H. Roy, Pearkes Interviews, No. 26, 17.3.66, p. 1-3, passim.

⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 5.

⁸⁸ C. P. Stacey, Six Years of War, Ottawa, Queen's Printer, 1955, p. 35.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY

From 1919 to 1939, Canadian defence policy was determined by two principal factors, a national desire to avoid overseas military commitments and the natural security afforded by the country's geographical location and great power shield. The first consideration implied that Canada needed no large army standing ready for possible service abroad and the second condition made unnecessary the maintenance of strong forces to protect the Canadian homeland against direct attack. In view of these factors, successive Canadian governments operated for practical purposes on the assumption that the primary role of the peacetime army was to assist the civil authority in preserving order during emergencies. Obviously, this role called for only a small army in no high degree of preparedness.

The desire to avoid overseas commitments originated in the lessons of the 1914-1918 Great War. During this conflict, the issue of conscription starkly emphasized the fundamental disagreement between the French and English Canadian concepts of national military duty. French Canadian objections to Canada's becoming involved in wars overseas strongly influenced politicians, particularly Mackenzie King, to adopt an isolationist foreign policy in the interests of preserving national unity. Another consideration significantly affecting the attitudes of many Canadians was the staggering cost of the Great War in both money

and lives. A proportion of the population, particularly in rural areas of the country, were convinced that Canada, as a New World country, had to protect herself from war and other supposedly Old World evils by placing herself in a kind of protective quarantine. Another large group of Canadians, though retaining a deep respect and affection for the Imperial connection, thought that Canada had proved her right to nation status by her war effort. Group members felt that Canada should emphasize her new status by maintaining complete freedom of action in Imperial affairs, making decisions on cases involving commitments only as the specific cases arose. This approach to foreign policy was also essentially isolationist, and like the other two approaches, it did not call for an army capable of service overseas.

After 1918, Canada had no cause to fear an invasion of her home soil. As a part of the British Empire she would still be under the protection of Britain in the event of any serious attack. The Royal Navy's command of the seas not only insured Canadian coasts against raids but also guaranteed that the Atlantic lines of communication would remain open to provide Canada with war materiel and British troops should they ever be needed. In fact, insulated by thousands of miles of ocean from every country but the United States, Canada had no reason to anticipate attack. Until the mid-1930's Europe was dominated by Canada's wartime allies; and in the Pacific, the Japanese and the Americans, although increasingly hostile towards each other, were both on good terms with Canada. As a Great War ally and subsequent friendly neighbour, the United States, in spite of Sutherland Brown's views, no

GILBERT BOND

longer posed a military threat to her northern neighbour. Indeed, as the post-war decades passed, Canadians realized that the United States would in her own interests protect Canada from foreign invasion. Thus insulated by distance and guarded against direct attack with the protective naval and military shields of the world's two greatest powers, Canada had no real need for an army even to protect her own homeland.

Although for the above reasons Russia posed no external threat to Canada, the Canadian government considered that country's doctrine of Bolshevism to be a menace to internal stability. (Despite the fact that for the twenty years after 1918 the government paid lip service to the army's theoretical role as the defender of Canada's boundaries, the only practical purpose served by the army in this period was to help maintain order in emergencies.)

This non-committal defence policy was the most significant handicap to military preparedness, but there also were other (factors which helped to cripple the army from 1919 to 1939. The first of these was, of course, the Great Depression. For almost seven years after 1930, the Canadian army struggled along on reduced pay and without adequate equipment or facilities as the government necessarily directed its expenditures and its attention toward the all-important work of overcoming the Depression.) As war clouds began to gather in Europe and the Far East, Prime Minister Mackenzie King hindered the army's efforts to rearm through his prolonged but sincere efforts to avoid war by pursuing a policy of appeasement.

GILBERT BOND
EDMONTON

The struggle toward rearmament was complicated not only by King's reluctance to authorize appropriately high expenditures but also by the deplorable equipment situation in the army; the result of many years of neglect. Canada's dependence upon Britain for war materiel seriously aggravated the re-equipment problem, for Canada lacked defence industries of her own and had to wait for what Britain could spare from her own even more desperate needs. In 1939 and 1940, Canada finally began producing her own munitions as the only sure way of meeting her own needs and in order to supplement the stores of her allies.

With the wisdom of hindsight, one can excuse the government's neglect of the army between 1919 and 1939 on the grounds that military preparedness, at least until 1934 or 1935, would merely have been useless extravagance. Canadian governments of the period were caught in something of a trap. On the one hand, they could not ignore the strong public feeling against overseas commitments. On the other, however, they could not reasonably disregard the army's argument that, whether she acknowledged it or not Canada had an Imperial obligation to be able to protect herself if she should ever be attacked while the rest of the Empire was somehow preoccupied in a war. Furthermore, no responsible member of a government could deny that if Britain herself were in danger, Canada would be drawn to stand by her by the force of Imperial sentiment.

To be consistent with their expressed beliefs in no-commitments abroad and fire-proof security from attack at home, Canadian governments should have reduced the armed forces, particularly the N.P.A.M., to minimum establishments. On the other hand, to conform with the realities

of Canada's position in the Empire, the governments should have supported strongly a Permanent Force and nucleus N.P.A.M. adequate to defend Canada or aid Britain with an expeditionary force.

Acutely conscious of the sensitive political issues involved in the problem, Canadian governments after 1919 pursued a compromise course satisfactory to no one. The isolationists were sure that the large paper military establishments meant prior acceptance of undesirable commitments. Members of the N.P.A.M. and Permanent Forces, such as George Pearkes, were left to strive as best they could to keep efficient a military organization that was much too large for its annual appropriations. By firing practices without ammunition, by tactical instruction in private homes, by exercises without troops and by disseminating through lectures and training programmes the invaluable military knowledge absorbed by a select few officers in British military schools, these men continued the struggle for preparedness. In this impossible task they did not wholly succeed, but their efforts were enough to preserve at least a partially trained, partially equipped nucleus force of sufficient size from which to build a wartime army.

GILBERT BOND

25% COTTON

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Appendix IMilitia Appropriations1917 - 1939

The following figures, compiled from the Canada Year Book, are not always consistent with the figures appearing in the House of Commons Debates. They are probably the most accurate ones available, however, having been prepared by the Dominion Bureau of Statistics some time after the estimates themselves were presented. The most frequent cause of variation between these figures and those in Hansard is probably revision of the estimates or the addition of supplementary estimates during the sessions.

Only the more significant items have been included, along with the annual total for the army as a whole. Figures are in thousands of dollars.

<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>N.P.A.M.</u>		<u>Cadet</u>	<u>Permanent</u>	<u>General</u>	<u>Total</u>
	<u>Training</u>	<u>Allowances</u>	<u>Services</u>	<u>Force</u>	<u>Stores</u>	
1917-18 ¹		71	91	2,297		3,888
1918-19 ¹		51	69	1,947		3,445
1919-20 ¹	34	91	74	3,089		4,635
1920-21 ²	1,500	120	390	6,500	400	12,802
1921-22 ²	1,500	120	450	6,255	197	12,564
1922-23 ²	1,000	120	350	5,500	100	10,852
1923-24 ²	1,050	100	450	5,290	160	10,799

¹These years were also covered by war appropriations carried over from the Great War. The figures are, therefore, incomplete.

²Figures from Canada Year Book, 1922-23, p. 913.

Appendix I

<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>N.P.A.M.</u>	<u>Cadet Services</u>	<u>Permanent Force</u>	<u>General Stores</u>	<u>Total</u>
1924-25 ³	1,610	400	4,800	390	
1925-26 ³	1,710	400	4,800	390	
1926-27 ³	1,660	400	4,800	390	
1927-28 ³	2,084	500	4,800	608	
1928-29 ³	2,315	500	4,950	892	
1929-30 ³	2,315	500	4,950	892	
1930-31 ⁴	2,325	500	5,011	1,000	
1931-32 ⁴	2,006	400	5,050	683	
1932-33 ⁴	1,887	360	4,844	663 ⁵	
1933-34 ⁴	1,994	300	4,910	668	
1934-35 ⁴	1,994	150	4,910	838	
1935-36 ⁶	2,402	150	5,230	1,451	
1936-37 ⁶	2,358	150	5,613	2,551	20 11.
1937-38 ⁶	2,579	140	5,848	6,061	14.5
1938-39 ⁶	2,830	140	5,848	3,854	12.00
1939-40 ⁷					21,837

³ Figures from Canada Year Book, 1930, p. 971.

⁴ Figures from Canada Year Book, 1934-35, p. 1114.

⁵ Figure includes manufacturing establishments.

⁶ Figures from Canada Year Book, 1938, p. 1045.

⁷ Figures from Canada Year Book, 1939.

Appendix IIMilitia Expenditures1913 - 1937

<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Expenditure</u>	<u>Source</u>
1913-14	\$10,988,162	<u>Canada Year Book</u> , 1919.
1914-15	9,991,817	<u>ibid.</u>
1915-16	4,681,502	"
1916-17	4,301,785	"
1917-18	3,887,838	"
1918-19	3,444,954	" , 1920.
1919-20	4,634,516	"
1920-21	10,058,625	"
1921-22	11,017,533	" , 1925.
1922-23	9,883,986	"
1923-24	9,761,956	"
1924-25	8,885,573	"
1925-26	9,256,628	"
1926-27	9,141,220	" , 1929.
1927-28	10,151,975	"
1928-29	11,044,334	" , 1930.
1929-30	11,032,749	" , 1934-35.
1930-31	10,952,949	"
1931-32	9,700,464	"
1932-33	8,718,881	"
1933-34	8,773,545	" , 1939.
1934-35	8,852,632	"
1935-36	10,141,230	"
1936-37	11,345,751	"
1937-38	17,221,198	"

Appendix IIIPaper Militia Strengths1914 - 1939

<u>March 31</u>	<u>Permanent Force</u>			<u>N.P.A.M.</u>		<u>Total</u>
	<u>Officers</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Officers</u>	<u>Men</u>	
1914			3,000	5,615	68,991	74,606
1918						
1919						
1920						
1921 ¹	447	3,865	4,312			
1922 ²			3,978			
1923			3,611			122,906
1924			3,483			123,053
1925			3,546	10,509	112,352	122,861
1926			3,562	10,240	117,273	122,513
1927			3,572	10,658	116,116	126,774
1928			3,684	9,424	115,455	124,879
1929			3,629	8,971	114,580	123,551
1930			3,766	9,050	116,545	125,595
1931			3,788	9,071	118,500	127,571
1932			3,771	9,029	125,722	134,751
1933						
1934			3,760	9,057	126,127	135,184
1935			3,781	9,010	124,925	133,935
1936			4,158	8,670	117,920	126,590
1937			4,234	7,006	79,551	86,557
1938			4,268	7,117	79,193	86,310
1939			4,268			

¹House of Commons Debates, 1921, p. 2278.²House of Commons Debates, 1923, p. 877.All other figures from Canada Year Book for the approximate year.

Appendix IV

Comparative National Defence

Expenditures

<u>Country</u>	<u>Year</u>				
	\$ Per Capita Amount		% Percentage of Total Budget		
	<u>1926-27</u> ¹	<u>1932-33</u> ²	<u>1933-34</u> ³	<u>1934-35</u> ³	<u>1935-36</u> ³
Australia	\$ 6.46		3.17	4.37	5.28
	% 10 1/7		10.4	9.5	10.8
Canada	\$ 1.45	1.35	1.19	1.41	1.77
	% 3 7/10	3.9	2.7	2.9	3.7
Great Britain	\$ 13.17		10.48	14.14	20.61
	% 14½		14.0	14.8	24.7
New Zealand	\$ 4.00	2.00	2.22	2.38	2.38
	% 4 1/6		3.8	3.6	
South Africa	\$ 2.86	2.03	3.34	4.53	4.53
	% 3 1/3		3.1	4.9	
France	\$ 5.70	11.15	17.94	16.79	25.00
	% 15	29.4	2.30	22.4	41.3
Japan	\$ 3.93		3.82	4.30	5.81
	% 27 3/4	34.1	43.7	46.6	46.8
Germany	\$ 2.28	2.46	5.29		
	% 9½		13.8		
Russia	\$ 2.37		5.95	9.77	17.62
	% 16½		10.2	12.6	18.9
Turkey	\$ 3.38				
	% 34 1/3				
United States	\$ 5.11		6.31	7.11	7.72
	% 16		10.9	11.8	14.5

¹ H. of C. Debates, April 11, 1927, p. 2248.

² Ibid., March 15, 1934, p. 1535.

³ Ibid., February 15, 1937, p. 899-900.

Appendix VA Typical Militia Recruiting Appeal,Winnipeg, 1931

Quoted by J. S. Woodsworth (H. of C. Debates, June 22, 1931, p. 2894).

Would you like to join a young man's athletic club? No membership fee. A club with plenty of floor space for gymnastics, indoor ball, volley ball, basketball, physical training classes, track work, boxing, wrestling; Private room for chess, checkers, or cards. Indoor range for rifle and revolver practice. Shower baths, etc. Snowshoe tramps during the winter. Football and track events in summer.

Instructors to teach you radio engineering, telegraphy or signalling with heliograph, semaphore and flags every Thursday evening each week. Open from 7 p.m. to 11 p.m. Also open every Tuesday evening from 8 to 11 p.m. for athletics and games.

The management of Canadian Pacific Railway and Canadian National Railways Telegraphs favour the suggestion that you should join. Members enrolled from the respective companies will be trained in two classes and regular competitions will be arranged if a sufficient number enroll. Plenty of healthful exercise, recreation and valuable instruction of subjects you wish to learn. No expense to you.

These privileges are extended to all members of the Winnipeg Light Infantry Athletic Club. Only one hour per week for military training such as drill, rifle, exercise, bayonet fighting, fencing, etc. It is of course understood that every member must take his part in military drill classes when present.

Only boys of good character and medically fit accepted. If you join, you can also quit any time you wish without obligations. Special concert with free refreshments on Saturday, November 29, for members only.

Be at McGregor St. Armoury, corner Machray and McGregor, Thursday, November 20, at 8 p.m. Report to Major E. C. Banks who will take your application. Canadian Pacific Railway versus Canadian National Railways. Enroll now and competitions can be arranged at once.

Appendix VIA Typical Trade Union Resolutionregarding the N.P.A.M. and Private Industry, 1930Quoted by J. S. Woodsworth (H. of C. Debates, June 27, 1931, p. 2894).The International Association
of Machinists

Montreal, November 11, 1930.

Whereas, the civilized nations of the world have declared their aims to be peace, the reduction of military armaments, the abolition of war and the settlement of all international disputes by conference and arbitration, and

Whereas, the League of Nations, of which Canada is a member, was organized for the purpose of bringing about the above objects, and Canada, in the person of her ministers and representatives has repeatedly avowed her desire to advance the cause of international peace and the progressive disarmament of the civilized world, and

Whereas, the entire experience of mankind has shown that it is impossible to ensure peace by preparing for war, but that, on the contrary, the organization of military force inevitably leads to its use for objects that have no relation to the advancement of the fundamental interests of mankind, and

Whereas, the last great war which devastated the world and brought civilization near to complete ruin was proclaimed to be a war to end war and to remove the threats of militarism from the earth, and

Whereas, it has come to our knowledge that the Canadian National Recreation Association has obtained authority from the military department of the Dominion of Canada to form a battery of field artillery, and is soliciting its members to join the said military organization, therefore be it

Resolved, that we, the members of lodge 111, of the International Association of Machinists declare that we are in accord with every influence that makes for peace, and are opposed to every influence that makes for war, that we view with distrust and disquiet the tendency to link military organization with industrial establishments and protest the action of the Canadian National Recreation Association in furthering this tendency.

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University of Victoria Bursary, 1967-68
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I.O.D.E. War Memorial Scholarship, 1968-69
.....
.....

Publications:

.....



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as reflected in the career of Major-General George R. Pearkes,

V.C."

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9 FEBRUARY 1972

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