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The March of the 104th Foot From Fredericton to Quebec, 1813

With Introduction by Major M. A. Pope, M.C., *p.s.c.*, R.C.E.

In his introduction to "Canada in the Commonwealth" Sir Robert Borden thus gently rebukes the late Rupert Brooke for having manifested a regrettable unacquaintance with Canadian history on the occasion of his visit to this country upwards of two decades ago:

"He found our countryside lonely, our mountains and forests, our great rivers and lakes, unimpressive, appealing in no way to the imagination. There were no memories, no voices, no dead:

> *'It is an empty land. To love the country here—mountains are worshipped not loved—is like embracing a wraith. A European can find nothing to satisfy the hunger of his heart. The air is too thin to breathe. He requires haunted woods and the friendly presence of ghosts.... How far away seem those grassy moonlit places of England that have been Roman camps or roads, where there is always serenity. . . . It is possible at a pinch to do without Gods. But one misses the dead!'*

"If Rupert Brooke had but listened, voices of the past were calling to him in all his journeying. They whispered to him on either side of the St. Lawrence from the Long Sault of the Ottawa, in the thunder of the Chaudière, on each battle-field by which he passed, from many a wilderness on which he looked. Can there be no ghosts save where the Roman once made his pathway? Between the surges of Cape North and the Western Ocean there is many a grave of explorer and adventurer on which the flower of remembrance will never fade, many a God's acre where sleep pioneer wardens of the wilderness and around which linger memories more appealing to Canadians than any associations that a Roman encampment could awaken.

"For, in truth, from Louisburg to Esquimalt the land teems with memories of adventure and romance, of courage and endurance, of devotion and heroism. The vales of the ocean provinces, the broad countryside of Quebec and Ontario, the mighty waterways, the vast western plains, the northern wilderness, the majestic summits of the Rockies and the shores of the Pacific are not dumb, but eloquent to one who will listen and can understand."

Few Canadians there are who can travel down the King's Highway by the shores of the St. Lawrence without being stirred by the voices of the past. Thanks to the American, Parkman, the romance of the French régime in Canada has been made familiar to those of the English tongue. It is impossible to remain unmoved at the record of the unending struggle and the unremitting toil of those early pioneers who eventually succeeded in subjecting rude nature to their necessities. And for those who live only in the present there must surely be an appeal in that long white line of glimmering villages, the pleasing orderliness of the countryside, the simple charm of the old French architecture, and the evidence at every hand of the *habitant's* love (not worship) of the soil which is not less fervent than that of the Norman peasant, his kinsman.

But even in the heart of Quebec no one race possesses a monopoly of the stirring deeds that have there been enacted. Abraham's Plain is a common heritage. And the long road leading from Fredericton up the valley of the St. John to Edmundston, along the Madawaska across Lake Temiscouata, over the Grand Portage and the Old Lake Road to St. André, thence up the south shore to Quebec, Montreal and on to Kingston, one hundred and seventeen years ago was the scene of a feat of endurance so magnificent in its every aspect that it should be for us a constant source of pride and inspiration.

In February of this year reference was made, in the *Montreal Gazette,* to the march of the 104th Regiment from Fredericton to Quebec during the winter months of 1813. The writer's interest having been aroused he addressed an enquiry to the Dominion Archives in the hope that some description of this remarkable feat might be available. With characteristic kindness Dr. Doughty promptly furnished a photostat copy of a letter which was published in *The Albion** in 1831, and which is given here verbatim.

History records many great marches. It is related that Xenophon, in 401 B.C., marched his army upwards of 4,000 miles in fourteen months fighting rear-guard actions most of the time. Marlborough's famous march in 1704, from the Moselle to the Rhine and the Danube, covered some 240 miles in a period of 25 days. In 1809 in the pursuit of Sir John Moore, Napoleon, in ten days, urged his army of 50,000 men some 200 miles. Lord Roberts' march from Kabul to Kandahar, a distance of 313 miles, was accomplished in 20 days.

The journey from Fredericton to Quebec by the route described in the following story measures approximately some 350 miles. From Quebec to Montreal by the old Intercolonial Railway the distance is 164 miles, while Kingston is 176 miles west of Montreal. Thus, as will be seen, this extraordinary march of upwards of 700 miles was carried out, partly in the depth of winter, partly during that transition period when the increasing power of the mid-day sun makes the going laborious—over country roads, forest tracks and in places where no trail of any kind existed, in the surprisingly short period of 52 days. Surely as remarkable a performance as history records.

The story of the march of the 104th Regiment is still told among the descendants of the early settlers in the valley of the St. John River. Elsewhere it seems to be little known. J. L. C's. inspiring account written, it is to be noted, with such a commendable restraint, quickens the pulse, and makes a not unimportant addition to those voices of the past which go to make up tradition.

*A paper published in New York for many years.

M. A. P.

A WINTER MARCH IN CANADA, IN 1813

From *The Albion,* November, 1831.

(NOTE. The spelling of the original has been preserved.)

THE encouragement given in one of the late numbers of this Journal to all officers who may have been placed in unusual situations, or in such as may tend to convey any novel intelligence, emboldens me to offer a few observations from my Journal during the march of the 104th Regiment, from Fredericton, in New Brunswick, to Quebec, and from thence to Kingston, in Upper Canada. I do not flatter myself that the reader will find anything highly instructive in this relation, but as our regiment was the first British corps that ever performed such a march during the height of a northern winter, a great part of it upon snow-shoes, it may, perhaps, be deemed not unworthy of insertion in this truly national Journal.

It cannot be denied, that at the breaking out of the war with the United States, in the month of June, 1812, Sir George Prevost found himself very inadequately provided with troops to defend the extensive line of frontier under his command, being upwards of eleven hundred miles from Quebec to Michilimackinack; assailable at many points, particularly all along the river St. Lawrence, from Cornwall up to Kingston, and along

the Niagara frontier, from Fort George to Fort Erie. His disposable force of regular troops did not much exceed 3,000 men to guard all the important points of this very prolonged base; indeed, it was currently reported at the commencement of the war, that the highest authorities of the country were of opinion that Upper Canada would not be maintained with this inadequate force. However, the judicious and firm measures of the gallant General Brock, assisted by the then formidable auxiliary Indian force, which the General well knew how to humour and to wield, saved the Upper Province from being occupied by the enemy in 1812.

The imposing preparations made by the United States for the campaign of 1813, induced Sir George Prevost to run the chance of weakening his force in New Brunswick, which was considered less assailable than Upper Canada. Sir George Prevost therefore determined that the 104th Regiment should perform a winter march from New Brunswick to Canada, which was effected as follows. Major-General Smyth, who commanded in New Brunswick, had received private information that the regiment was to march for Canada, which he kept secret though from the frequent drills and marches it performed by companies, or as a corps on snow-shoes, it was evidently being prepared for some movement. On the 5th of February a garrison order announced the intended march. It was hailed by men and officers with enthusiasm, as an effort yet unknown in British warfare, and therefore well worthy of British soldiers to accomplish.

It must here be observed that the regiment was admirably composed for the service, having been raised in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, principally in the latter province, from the descendants of the veterans who had served in the former war, a class of loyal settlers, equally attached to the soil and to Old England. There were also a considerable number of Canadians in it, so that these, as well as the New Brunswickers, being, as it were, indigenous to the country, were thoroughly fitted to endure cold and hardships; good axemen, able to build a log hut with an axe alone; good boatmen, good marksmen, many of them as expert as Indians in a canoe, and as alert as hunters on snow-shoes The *morale* of the corps was not at all inferior to *physique,*—as there is a characteristic cheerfulness in the Canadian soldier, inherited from his French ancestry, which being lively and good tempered, tended much towards lightening the labours of a heavy march, or the hardships of a campaign, and accorded perfectly with the dogged and varied characters of the English, Irish and Scotch, which completed the regiment.

There had already fallen a greater quantity of snow than had been known during the nine preceding years, and the weather was remarkably cold. On the 4th or 5th of February the thermometer had been as low as 17° below zero.

It had been understood that the Indians or natives were to have been sent on to construct wigwams or huts to shelter the men in at every fifteen miles distance, in order to relieve them from the fatigue of hutting themselves at the close of a long day's march, but by some misunderstanding this was not carried into effect.

Every arrangement being completed, and the regiment in good marching order, some detachments having already come a hundred miles up to Fredericton, Colonel Halkett, with the head-quarters and the grenadier company, marched on the 16th February, 1813; a battalion company following on each succeeding day, and the light company, forming the rearguard, on Sunday the 21st.

It may not be deemed altogether irrelevant to state, that on quitting Fredericton, the whole of the officers felt the deepest regret at parting from a circle of society that had treated them with the greatest kindness and cordiality; where a British uniform, worn with credit and conduct, was a sure passport, without a further introduction, to the friendly hospitality of the worthy inhabitants of New Brunswick. I shall never forget the morning parade of that Sunday, for although we marched with the best intentions it was impossible not to feel, in a certain degree, low spirited, as our bugles struck up the merry air, "The Girls we leave behind us"; most of our gallant fellows being, as it proved, destined never to revisit their sisters or sweethearts. The company presented a most unmilitary appearance, as it marched without arms or knapsacks, in Indian file, divided into squads, so many to each Tobagin, the rear of it being nearly half a mile from the front. It would be needless here to detail our days' marches, as a general outline of them is sufficient.

The first seven days' marches being through a tolerably well settled country, we found them comparatively easy, though sometimes the snow might be eight inches or a foot in depth, from the circumstances of the foundation of it being a beaten road, and at the close of each day's march houses or barns to lodge the men in.

On the 26th, while marching in rear of the company, a person of the name of Wilson overtook me in his sleigh; he had conducted the unfortunate Lord Edward Fitzgerald in the winter of 1789, who walked on snow-shoes through the then altogether untracked wilderness from Fredericton to Quebec; he said that Lord Edward had supported the fatigues and hardships of the journey with the greatest cheerfulness and aptitude and described him as a most amiable young man.

On the 29th we hutted; this operation was most fatiguing and disheartening after a heavy day's march, as it had snowed incessantly, and so heavily that we frequently lost our narrow snow-shoe track, and, if careless, were precipitated into deep snow; and one man getting a fall of this kind caused a halt to all those in his rear for ten minutes or a quarter of an hour, until he had scrambled out from his cold bath; but the inconvenience of keeping all the rear at a halt was found so great that it was soon agreed to march on and leave the straggler to regain his place when he could, which was by no means an easy matter, and made officers and men very careful not to fall if they could avoid it, from the fear of having to march some distance in the deep snow.

In order to relieve the men, each officer and man took his turn to break the road, as it was called, by marching as leader for ten or fifteen minutes, then stepping one pace aside and letting the whole company pass

him, when he threw off his snow-shoes and marched on a firm, hard path in the rear It must be seen that by this arrangement the first pair of snow-shoes had to break a path in front, the second pair improved the track of the first, the third and every succeeding rendered it firmer and harder, till the *tobogins* came which travelled on a pretty solid path.—We generally marched close along the edge of the river, whenever no rapids intervened to prevent it, and always constructed our huts on the windward side of it in the woods, in order to gain a little shelter. The men's hands were frequently so cold that they could scarcely work; however, as they were divided into squads, the best axemen immeditely set to felling young pine trees to form the rafters for the hut, these being trimmed of all their lateral branches, were cut to about fifteen feet in height; others trimmed branches of pine for thatching it; others felled hard wood and cut into logs for burning; while these were at work, some were clearing away spaces for the areas of the hut, which was done by taking off their snow-shoes and using them as shovels to throw back the snow till they got to the soil destined for the floor, four or five feet deep, the snow that was thrown back formed a high wall round it, which served to shelter us somewhat from the chilling wind; within this area the trimmed branches were placed in a conical or lengthened form and tied at top; they were then covered with pine boughs thickly laid over each: the points of the branches being downwards made it an excellent thatch, quite impervious to the snow, with the exception of a hole at the top, which was left for a chimney A blazing fire was then lit in the centre of the hut, and all around it was strewed a thick layer of small pine branches, which formed a delicious and fragrant bed: here were no feather bed soldiers The next precaution was to close the only aperture in the hut which was intended for a doorway, made just large enough for a man to creep through edgewise, and a blanket, which everyone in turn grumbled to give up, served as an inner door to shut out the cold if possible But I may well say if possible, as those who have not experienced it cannot figure to themselves the extreme frigidity of a temperature from 18° to 27° below zero, that is, from 50° to 59° below freezing. While our feet were burning, which was sometimes literally the case whilst asleep, our heads were in a freezing temperature, as water immediately froze if placed near the inner circumference of the hut. It generally happened that we were as completely envelopd in smoke as an Esquemaux family, but, like them, we found it much more agreeable than having no smoke at all, as it warmed the hut; moreover, I imagined that sleep without fire in such cold would have proved the sleep of death.

On the 1st of March we reached the grand falls of the river St. John, one hundred and fifty miles from Fredericton, where there is a small settlement; we could not judge of its state of forwardness, every spot being covered with a mantle of snow; but the inhabitants appeared to be happy and contented; they said they went down to Fredericton once or twice a year, to sell or barter their furs for what commodities they required, and added, that their wants were few and simple. After dinner most of the officers went to see the fall; it presented a magnificent spectacle. In summer it

was eighty-four feet high and nine hundred feet in width, but it was now greatly reduced by the quantity of ice which environed it. The spray, having frozen as it rose, had gradually so condensed itself that it had joined and formed a splendid, irregular, fantastical arch of surprising brilliancy and lightness, in all the rugged and mixed varieties of form which frost gives to falling water, suddenly arrested by congelation. The banks on each side from the same cause were like solid, irregular, glassy buttresses supporting the arch; and the surrounding trees being beautifully fringed with frost, when the sun rose on the ice and displayed the prismatic colors playing on it, the scene called to mind the idea of an enchanted palace of glass, fitter, indeed, for a person to gaze on than inhabit; which was strictly true, for desolation reigned around—no beast, bird nor even insect cheered the sight or enlivened the ear, the only sound that disturbed the icy, death-like stillness around was the resistless, roaring river, rushing impatiently through its restricted and fringed bed of ice into the gulph beneath, whence surging on it hurried to a considerable distance before the frost had power to conceal it under a bed of ice.

It may be proper to remark here, that at the grand falls was the last military post in the province of New Brunswick, and although I am unable to give a correct description of it from the circumstance of the country being so completely covered with snow, it was nevertheless represented as being from its precipitous situation convertible into a very strong point of defence, the more important as it is the nearest point to the American boundary all along our line of march, and that by which the mail must pass in the winter season into Canada; besides being the only good line of march for troops similarly situated with ourselves, the St John's and Madawaska rivers, and the Jemisquata lake forming a level road of march on for two hundred miles, a circumstance of vast importance to the moving troops in winter, as they would otherwise have to march entirely through the brush-woods and forests, which would increase their hardships and retard their progress.

It would be highly desirable that we should gain a little more extent of our boundary in a line from the south bay on the grand lake to Quebec, a little within that followed by Lord Edward Fitzgerald: land in itself unimportant to the Americans, but of consequence to us, as it would prevent the likelihood of their hereafter wishing to gain for a boundary the western bank of the river St. John, which would be fatal to our communication with Canada. Whilst marching this day the weather was so cold that several of us got frost-bitten, and one person, an inhabitant of the vicinity of the falls, was frozen to death.

On Wednesday, the 2nd of March, we arrived at *Larouciers,* at the head of the Madawaska settlement; here I began to find the French language of great service to me, as I did through all Lower Canada. The worthy Curé, *Monsieur Rabbi,* was delighted to meet a British officer who could converse with him freely, and accordingly not only invited me to take my billet at his house, but also insisted that one of my brother subs should acompany me, where he treated us with the greatest hospitality.

This insulated settlement is entirely separated from the busy world; a few hundred French are here settled in peaceful retirement: their kind and worthy Pastor assured me that crimes were quite unknown in this peaceful spot, he was their confessor, their adviser, and their judge, and if a difference ever did exist amongst them, it was speedily referred to him, and his decision was final. Their habits and manners were simple and kind, altogether French; like the ant in Lafontaine's fable, they told me they grew enough in summer to supply their wants for the winter, which they passed in mirth and friendly intercourse. From the worthy Curé's description, and the lively and contented air of the people, I should take this to be the only Arcadia now existing in the world. I am not aware that these good people considered us as great intruders, but they certainly did not give us much time to corrupt them, as they mounted the whole of us, officers and men, in sleighs, and drove us through their settlement, twenty-one miles in a day, which by the way was a great treat, and the men vowed that it was the pleasantest day's *march* that they had had.

On the 4th of March the cold was gradually increasing and an incessant snow-storm filling the track up rapidly, made the dragging of the tobogins exceedingly laborious, especially as we occasionally had to quit the Madawaska river owing to rapids in it which had not frozen, and the thickness of the brush-wood and the forest along the edge of it. When we got to the end of our day's march the cold was so intense that the men could scarcely use their fingers to hew down the fire-wood, or to build huts, and it was dark before we could commence cooking; if sticking a bit of salt pork on the end of a twig and holding it to the fire could be so termed.

On the morning of the 5th the cold had greatly augmented and the thermometer once more fell to 27° below zero, together with a gale, a north-wester in our teeth, which scarcely left us power to breathe; indeed, the intensity of the cold is indescribable, the captain of the company anticipated the effects of it, and went on with an officer and a few men to arrange the huts, and prepare fires for our reception. About mid-day, on turning an angle or corner along the river, I was surprised to find that the head of the company had stopped, which caused the centre and the rear to halt as they came up; knowing the dangerous consequences that might ensue from a prolonged halt in such excessive cold, I hastened in the deep snow to the head of the company, and going along, I observed that almost every man was already more or less frost-bitten, and was occupied in rubbing his cheeks or nose, or both with snow; in my progress I also was caught by the nose, and when I turned the corner in the river, I really thought I should not have been able to proceed, the cold wind appeared to penetrate through my body in defiance of flannels or furs; I however urged the men on, as soon as we had taken time to lay one poor fellow upon a tobogin whose whole body was frost-bitten, and covered him with blankets. By changing the leading file every four or five minutes we at length got to the huts, having about ninety men out of 105 more or less frost-bitten on that occasion. On arriving at the huts we found that the company which should have been a day's march a-head of us were still hutted, they had

attempted to cross the Temisquata lake in the morning, but the cold wind blowing over it was so exquisitely keen, as to freeze many of his men, the captain of it faced about and returned to the huts. It was impossible to get warm that night, one officer literally scorched his mocasins on his feet in his sleep, by being anxious to keep them warm.

The next morning the wind having abated both companies crossed the lake. The marching this day was very different from any thing we had yet experienced in our journeys; the sun having begun to have some power on the snow had thawed the surface of it, which froze again in the night, and formed a sheet of thin ice, sufficiently strong to bear a light person, but a heavy man would frequently break through, and sink into the substratum of snow, till he was arrested by the firm ice on the lake; this was very troublesome and laborious work, but those who chose to keep their snow-shoes on, avoided it, and marched at a great pace over the ice. It was an eighteen-mile march, and we were delighted to get to an habitation on the edge of the portage.

We had to leave poor Rogers, who was so severely frost-bitten on the 6th, in charge of a corporal, with the woodsman at the portage, who promised to recover him speedily by means of simples and herbs, though to us his life appeared in danger; he was quite a hideous spectacle, altogether one ulcerated mass, as if scalded all over from boiling water; however, he rejoined us at Kingston in six weeks perfectly recovered.

The next day's march was through a mountainous country which is called the "Grand Portage"; some parts of the pine forest through which we passed had been burned for clearing and presented a curious picture. The black and tall grim pine trees, rearing their scathed heads to the sky, seemed like the ghosts, or rather skeletons, of the noble forms they once possessed, and contrasted strangely with the virgin snow on which they appeared to stand. It was altogether a most dreary and laborious day's march, as the snow drift in some places was ten or twelve feet deep, and the constant ascent and descent made it excessively fatiguing for the tobogin men; the descent of the hills was even more dangerous than the ascent, for if a *tobogin* once got a fair start down hill, it shot to the foot of the hill like a car down a *"montagne russe"* with amazing velocity, excepting where the rider was awkward, and in this way there were several upsets, to the great amusement of all who escaped an accident; thus it was necessary speedily to put an end to this, as some of the *tobogins* got injured by it, and on this occasion delayed the rear of the company so much, that the head of it had finished its march by ten or eleven o'clock in the morning, whereas the rear-guard did not arrive till half-past five. After our frugal meal of biscuit and pork, we turned, not in, but as usual round the fire on our green bed of pine, but our refreshing sleep was doomed to be broken this night by a novel accident.

The wind being high had so completely dried the top of our pine thatch, that it caught fire, and on waking from a sound slumber I found myself in a blaze, in a complete *"auto de fe"*, for there was no appearance of a door or outlet, so instantaneous was the blaze; however, a yell of despair

from the giant form of an officer of the regiment, who dashed into the hut through the flames, exclaiming, "Holy J——s, my money box!" which he snatched up with the fondness of a father saving his only child from peril, enabled me to dash out after him, dragging my *all* with me, a change of suit, in a hysterical fit of laughter, at the strange lamentation of our brother-officer. We were some little time occupied in snow-balling the fire to extinguish the flames, for fear that the men's huts should have also caught fire; but it was a most ludicrous sight as we were floundering in the deep snow, up to our middles or shoulders, not having time to put on our snow-shoes; several of the men and officers got frost-bitten in this adventure.

The next morning we started with joyful countenances, under the impression that it was our last day's march through an uninhabitated country —and that the morrow should enable us to march in a region where the axe had mastered the forest, and cultivation, however rude, and in its infancy, announced at least that the hand of man was there; it was so solemn a reflection, that we had been completely left to ourselves for many days, with nothing but snow, the sky, or the interminable silent forest to look upon, that both men and officers were heartily rejoiced when they beheld a worthy gentleman of the commissariat with a *horse* in a sleigh, who had been sent from Quebec to receive us: and in addition to the Government rum and rations provided for us, he kindly and considerately brought with him an ample supply of fowls, hams, veal and wines, three miles into the portage, which afforded us the best meal we had ever tasted, and gratitude proclaimed our worthy friend ever after, a standing toast among us.

After our repast, we moved on in the parish of St. Andrews (*sic*) (St. André?), to a village from whence we saw spread before us the magnificent St. Lawrence, eighteen miles wide; we obtained comfortable billets for men and officers, and where for the first time in seventeen days we regularly washed and dressed ourselves, in addition to which a well cooked dinner, which more vitiated appetites would have probably called execrable, and good beds made us forget our fatigues. Our march from hence to Quebec was along a good beaten snow road, and marches of eighteen or twenty miles, mere exercise for us, so that our last seven days passed away merrily, under the cheering smiles of the worthy Canadians, who welcomed us as a nondescript race that had never been seen in those quiet parts before, being the first regiment that had ever been there, and our merry bugles were quite a novel treat to the Canadian lasses. The country along the river St. Lawrence up to Quebec was cleared in a belt; ranging from half a mile to three miles in depth. We passed through several villages almost entirely built of wood, with neat looking churches roofed with tin, so that when the sun shone on them, they presented a brilliant and elegant appearance.

On the 25th, our twenty-fourth (*sic*) day's march, we entered Quebec, greeted by an immense concourse of people, who appeared to consider us quite the lions of the army, after our unexampled march; the Quebec papers called us in the words of the poet—

"Fine young fellows, fit to pluck
Bright honour from the pale-faced moon".

Sir George Prevost, on inspecting our six companies, 550 rank and file, paid us the highest compliments, and to show us that he really thought us in good wind, he ordered the grenadiers and light company to march on the 25th 200 miles for Chambly, to join the light brigade there; but it appeared that every general officer who saw or heard of us considered that we were in thorough training, for on getting near Montreal, Colonel Drummond sent me on to General de Rottenburgh to report our speedy arrival, when on my honestly avowing we were in excellent wind, the General said, "Then he should send us on 200 miles further to Kingston"—when I reported the circumstance to Colonel Drummond, who was marching at the head of the companies, one of the men exclaimed—"It's no wonder; they think we are like the children of Israel, we must march forty years before we halt!" others hoped that as it was the 1st of April, the General merely meant to make April fools of us, and let us off with a fright; but the 2nd of April undeceived us: we were off for Kingston.

I do not describe this part of our march from Quebec to Kingston, as many other regiments have performed it, none however in so short a space of time; it was nevertheless very severe, as the sun had now power to thaw the snow and the ice over the small streams, some of which we were obliged to ford up to our middles, when the water was so intolerably cold, that the sudden shock to our pores, open from perspiration, was not a little trying to the best constitution, and caused excessive pain in the loins.

On the 12th of April we were marching up a gentle ascent, and just as the head files were rising it, there was a general exclamation of "The sea, the sea—the ships, the ships!" the whole of us spontaneously broke and ran to witness the novel and interesting sight Some of us had been marching between eight hundred and a thousand miles in six weeks, with only ten days' halt, during which time we had never lost sight of a forest, when suddenly there lay before our astonished and delighted view the town of Kingston, the magnificent Lake Ontario, and what was far more surprising still, a squadron of ships-of-war frozen on its bosom. It produced a striking and indescribable sensation, as none of us Europeans appeared to have reflected on the circumstance of being sure to find a fleet of men-of-war on a fresh water lake. After having feasted our eyes a while, the companies resumed their wonted order, and having washed the mud off our legs in a rivulet, that we might appear very clean in getting under the scrutiny of the fair sex, we made our triumphant entry into Kingston to the sound of our merry bugles.

As my purpose was merely to describe a winter march in Canada, I shall avoid other descriptions; but as a few general observations may be useful, I may be pardoned for making them.

The comparative repose which necessarily followed our long march, together with good feeding, occasioned disorders amongst the men; and although we had not lost a single man during the march, many were ill and a few died from the effects of it; but it was observed that these were all the hardest drinkers; indeed, there is no doubt whatever that dram-drinking is highly injurious in a very cold country, as the heat that is momentarily

conveyed to the body is followed by a re-action, which the cold turns quickly into a numbness, and retarded circulation.

Under the circumstance of a regiment having to perform a similar march, it would appear advisable to use snow-shoes for eight or ten miles daily, for at least a month previous to its march, in order to accustom the men not only to tie on their snow-shoes, and to wear them with ease to themselves, but also to enable them to know how to dress their moccasins properly, and to pack and drag their tobogins.

Indians or natives should be sent on a day's march a-head of the regiment to prepare huts for the officers and men, to cut wood and to boil water in readiness for their arrival, as I should consider warm tea or warm broth made from portable soup, far more refreshing and restoring than the piece of pork that was allowed to the 104th Regiment.

The men were so fatigued and chilled by the cold on some occasions, that they would scarcely exert themselves to cut wood for firing! and I feel confident, that under similar circumstances, a corps differently composed might have been placed in a very uncomfortable situation; but the advantage of having a great number of natives of the country in the corps was manifest.

Brother soldiers will pardon the *esprit de corps* which leads me to say, that during this long march, under considerable privations and hardships, not one single robbery was committed by the men, nor was there a single report made against them by the inhabitants to the commanding officer.

J. L. C. Capt. late 104th Regt.

EDITORIAL NOTE.

The 104th Regiment of Foot was raised in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick in 1803 as the New Brunswick Fencible Regiment. In 1810 it was taken into the line as the 104th Regiment of Foot. In that year its much depleted ranks were again recruited up to strength in the province of New Brunswick. Most of its subalterns were members of U. E. Loyalist families. The record of the regiment during the War of 1812 was a creditable one and on its conclusion it was authorized to bear "Niagara" on its colours. The 104th was disbanded at Montreal on 24th May, 1817.

"J.L.C.", the officer whose modest story of the notable winter march of the 104th is quoted above, was evidently Captain John Le Couteur, who, there is some reason to believe, came from the Channel Islands and was probably a son or near relative of Lieutenant-General John Le Couteur, a prominent officer in his day who, as a colonel, was Inspector of the Militia Infantry, Jersey Island, from 1798 to 1811, when he was promoted to general's rank.

Contemporary Army Lists disclose that John Le Couteur, junior, was commissioned as an ensign in the 96th Foot on the 15th November, 1810. He was transferred to the 104th Foot as a lieutenant 21st November, 1811. He seems to have been seconded from his regiment very soon after its arrival at Kingston at the end of its long march, for he is shown by Homfray Irving as having taken over, about June, 1813, the appointment of Adjutant of the 2nd Battalion Militia Light Infantry. This battalion was formed at Chambly out of the two flank companies of the 1st and 4th Select Embodied Militia and the second flank company of the 3rd Select Embodied Militia, and was incorporated with the Light Infantry of the line. Though the battalion was disembodied in November, 1813, Le Couteur continued to serve throughout the remainder of the war as Adjutant to De Haren, who commanded various mixed bodies of Light Infantry

on the Niagara Frontier until peace was signed. According to Hart's Army List, Le Couteur was present at "Sackett's Harbour, battle of Niagara, storming of Fort Erie, Cross Roads and many skirmishes with the Light Division." On the conclusion of the war he rejoined his regiment. Three months after the disbandment of the 104th he was given his captaincy and transferred to the Half Pay List. Captain Le Couteur was not again employed, but his name continues to appear among half pay officers in the Army List until 1857; presumably he died in that year.

Editor *C.D.Q.*

CANADIAN DEFENCE QUARTERLY ESSAY.

Subject Selected for the 1930 Essay.

"Assuming that the rôles of the armed forces of Canada are derived from our obligations under the Covenant of the League of Nations; our obligations to the British Commonwealth of Nations; and our obligations in respect to National Defence:

"Discuss the rôles which should be assigned to the armed forces of Canada, indicate the form which these forces should take and outline the organization required."

RULES OF THE COMPETITION.

1. Subject to the rules contained herein the Committee of the *Canadian Defence Quarterly* will award the sum of $200 for the best essay, or essays, submitted on the subject set out above.

2. The right to compete is limited to individuals who have served, or have been attached, or are actually serving or are attached as officers or in other ranks or ratings of His Majesty's Canadian Forces, and to those who have served or are serving in the Canadian Civil Service (Federal).

3. The essays must not exceed 10,000 words in length; they must be typewritten and submitted in triplicate.

4. The authorship of the essays must be strictly anonymous. Each competitor will select a motto and will enclose a sealed envelope with his essay. The full name and address of the author must be enclosed in the sealed envelope. The motto is to be typewritten on the outside of the envelope and must also appear on the first page of the essay.

5. The title and page of any published or unpublished work, to which reference is made in any essay or from which extracts are taken, must be quoted.

6. The essays should be addressed to, and must reach the office of the Editor of the *Canadian Defence Quarterly,* Woods Building, Slater Street, Ottawa, not later than the **1st October, 1930.***

7. The essays will be judged by three referees. One each to be named by the Chief of the General Staff, the Chief of the Naval Staff and the Director of the Royal Canadian Air Force.

8. The referees will decide all matters in relation to the award of the prize. They may give the award to one competitor, or divide it between the authors of two or more essays if considered to be of equal merit, or they may make no award if they deem that the essays submitted are not of a sufficiently high standard.

9. The result of the competition will be made known in the *Canadian Defence Quarterly* in January, 1931, and the prize essay will be published, if possible, in that issue; otherwise in the issue for April, 1931.

Essays graded second and third, in order of merit, will be published in subsequent issues of the *Quarterly,* provided a recommendation to such effect is made by the referees.

10. The right to first publication of all essays submitted is reserved to the *Canadian Defence Quarterly.*

*NOTE. This date has been substituted for 1st August, as given in rules published in the April issue of the *C.D.Q.*