

REPORT NO. 15  
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CANADIAN FORCES HEADQUARTERS

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Attempts to integrate Canada's  
Armed Forces before 1945

1. This Report describes various attempts to integrate Canada's Armed Forces prior to Mr. Paul T. Hellyer becoming Minister of National Defence in April 1963. It is too soon to attempt to evaluate his drastic action which seems, at the moment, destined to lead to the creation of a single unified Canadian Armed Force. Even this study can be made only against the command and staff structures that have existed since 1867.

2. Although it may be impossible to prove, the present writer is convinced that the continual struggle waged between politicians and uniformed officers for control of the armed forces in every democratic nation, and the bureaucratic application of the Roman dictum "divide and rule," have had a great deal to do with the

present story. "Economy and/or efficiency" seems to have been the other major arguing point over the years.

As it was in the beginning

3. The British North America Act of 29 March 1867 declared that the Parliament of Canada should have exclusive legislative authority for the "Militia, Military and Naval Service, and Defence." When it took effect on 1 July 1867, and a Dominion of Canada came into being, the Hon. George E. Cartier, the senior French-speaking member of the new Government headed by Sir John A. Macdonald, became Minister of Militia and Defence. Practical considerations determined that many sections of the Militia Act, which was subsequently passed by the first Canadian Parliament and given royal assent by the Governor General on 22 May 1868, should have wording identical to that of the legislation for the earlier Province of Canada.<sup>1</sup> The framework of the earlier Canadian Militia was reorganized into seven Military Districts, each headed by a Deputy Adjutant General (Lieutenant-Colonel), and expanded to include New Brunswick as Military District No. 8 and Nova Scotia as Military District No. 9. These nine D.A.Gs. and a total of 22 Brigade Majors (one for each Brigade Division) were employed on a full time basis to supervise the enrolment of the Reserve Militia and the training and administration of the Active

Militia. The Reserve Militia was merely a new name for the traditional sedentary militia in which most physically fit males aged 18-60 were obligated to serve if called upon. The Active Militia had three components: the Volunteer units of cavalry, artillery and infantry that trained on a part time basis; a Regular Militia that might be formed from men aged 18-40 who, in the event of an emergency, either volunteered or were balloted for service; companies of Marine Militia consisting of men employed as sailors on the Great Lakes or the Atlantic Coast.<sup>2</sup>

4. The senior military appointment of Adjutant General of Militia was assumed by Colonel Patrick L. MacDougall, a competent British officer who had been borrowed by the Province of Canada from the British Army in April 1865 to serve in a similar role. His Deputy Adjutant General at the tiny headquarters in Ottawa was Lieutenant-Colonel Walker Powell, a Canadian militia officer. The remainder of the personnel of the Department of Militia and Defence were civilians, even though a number of them insisted on using the rank they held in the Militia. Among these was the Deputy Minister of Militia and Defence, Major George Futvoye, whose appointment was effective 29 May 1868.<sup>3</sup> The Militia Act stated that the duties of the Deputy Minister should be prescribed by Order in Council.<sup>4</sup> His civilian branch included the personnel handling military stores and

munitions, as well as all expenditures and the day-to-day administration of the Department. Undoubtedly he felt that he was the deputy of the Minister in all things, as were the Deputy Ministers of the other Departments of Government. His position was strengthened, in practice, by the fact that he was a permanent civilian servant, whereas the Adjutant General was a British soldier whose regular career was being interrupted only for the interval that he might be serving the Canadian Government. George Futvoye ceased being Deputy Minister in 1875. His successor, Colonel C. Eugène Panet would continue in office until 1898. Moreover, every Deputy Minister of Militia and Defence would be a French-speaking Canadian.

5. Both the British North America Act and the Militia Act clearly specified that Queen Victoria should be Commander-in-Chief of any armed forces that Canada might create, although the Governor-General might act on her behalf. This was only common sense since, in the event of emergency, it was intended that the Militia should serve as auxiliaries to the British troops in Canada, under the command of British officers. Operations would be directed by the Lieutenant-General Commanding in North America, who had a considerable headquarters at Montreal, so the British officer employed by the Canadian Government as Adjutant General of Militia (Colonel MacDougall) was concerned, in practice, only with the administration

and peacetime training of the volunteer militia. An excellent example of this was the three Administrative battalions employed on frontier duty during the Fenian threat. Formed on 21 Apr 1865,<sup>5</sup> an order of 29 Apr<sup>6</sup> placed these battalions under command of Lt Gen Sir W.F. Williams, the Lieutenant-General Commanding in North America.

6. The last British troops were withdrawn from Central Canada in 1871, but for many years the continuing small British garrison at Halifax was commanded by a Lieutenant-General who would, in the event of there being a war with the United States, immediately become responsible for the military defence of Canada. Hindsight suggest, however, that settlement of Anglo-American matters in dispute by the Treaty of Washington, signed on 9 May 1871, had rendered the possibility of war with the United States most unlikely. Certainly successive Canadian Governments thought so, for no effort was made to make the Active Militia truly proficient and, following the retirement of a dying Sir George Cartier, the portfolio of Militia and Defence was held by a succession of political nonentities. Two small batteries of artillery were organized on a full time basis in 1871 to take over the installations vacated by the British Army and serve as gunnery schools for the militia; similar cavalry and infantry schools were added in 1883. The result was a permanent force and, from 1887 onwards a pension scheme, but there were no

supporting services to give it even the semblance of a regular army and most politicians envisaged its principal employment, apart from training militiamen, as providing "aid to the civil power" in possible industrial disputes between capital and labour. The few struggling companies of Marine Militia, had long since vanished, interest having dwindled as rapidly as American-British-Canadian relations had improved.

7. The staff of the Department of Militia and Defence in Ottawa continued small. The Minister's office consisted of three clerks and a messenger. The Deputy Minister, responsible for accounts and stores, had a larger establishment: five clerks and a messenger in the Accounts Branch and four clerks employed with the Director of Stores and Keeper of Military Properties including Lieutenant-Colonel Wily who was actually only a chief clerk. The adjutant General's staff consisted of Lieutenant-Colonel Walker Powell, a chief clerk, five clerks, an office keeper and a messenger.<sup>7</sup> The senior military appointment was upgraded to General Officer Commanding the Canadian Militia early in 1875, and the appointment which was restricted to a British officer, went to Major-General Edward Selby Smyth. Although Selby Smyth was charged with "the military command and discipline of the Militia," his immediate military staff consisted of one aide-de-camp.<sup>8</sup> The now lesser military appointment of Adjutant General went

to Colonel Walker Powell, (hitherto the D.A.G. at Headquarters)<sup>9</sup> who would manage to hold onto it for more than 20 years and come to consider himself indispensable. A Quartermaster General finally was added in 1893, with the appointment going to Major Percy H.N. Lake of the British Army.<sup>10</sup>

8. Major Lake was too junior and arrived too late on the scene to influence one way or another the chronic "difficulty and friction between the Military and Civil Branches of the Militia Department." Selby Smyth had been generally popular in Canada and the Canadian Government had requested that he remain longer than his specified tour as General Officer Commanding the Canadian Militia, but every one of his successors would either resign or be fired before the prescribed term in office had been completed. British officers accepted a tour of duty in Canada for a variety of reasons and there is no evidence to suggest that the Commander-in-Chief of the British Army, Field-Marshal H.R.H. the Duke of Cambridge, instructed them to pursue a course at odds with that of the Canadian Government. There is, however, every reason to believe that the succession of G.Os.C. really considered that their appointment was analogous to that of the Duke of Cambridge, who was supported by his cousin, Queen Victoria, in his long drawn out battle to remain the real Commander-in-Chief of the British Army, in spite the wishes of a succession of British

Governments; whereas, in point of fact they were merely temporary employees of the Canadian Government and responsible in no way whatsoever to anyone in London, England. On the other hand, Colonel Walker Powell and the other Canadian militia officers employed on staff in Ottawa and in the Military Districts had enjoyed long tenure in office, in part at least, because of the machinations of party politics. Thus in any controversy, they were more likely to side with the civilian Deputy Minister who was responsible for dispensing political patronage than with a strange British officer who regarded them as rank amateurs in military matters. In consequence, the Civil Branch had, as Major-General E.T.H. Hutton pointed out in his first report on the State of the Canadian Militia for 1898, "usurped many of the functions of the Military Command," (see Report No. 11).

9. Major-General Hutton suggested the removal of all strictly military functions from the Deputy Minister's hands, leaving him with only a Civil (Financial) Branch consisting of Accounting, Contracts and Lands, and Manufacturing (at the Dominion Cartridge Factory, to be renamed Dominion Arsenal in 1900, in Quebec City.) Hutton was particularly insistent on the need to create an Ordnance Stores Corps to assume responsibility for the "custody, maintenance and issue of all warlike stores and military equipment" which duties were then performed by civilians. In his second, and last, annual report for

1899, Hutton reiterated his views, placing emphasis on the need to remove the control of ordnance stores, military engineering and military pay from control by the Deputy Minister. Historians have paid more attention to Hutton's condemnation of the Canadian Militia as being "merely a collection of cavalry, artillery and infantry units of varying strength" and without "cohesion, without staff, and without those military departments by which an army is moved, fed or ministered to in sickness". His proclaimed object was the creation of a "militia army" - a balanced force of all arms, possessing the administrative services without which no army can take the field, and well enough trained and equipped to have a real military value in the event of emergency.

10. Major-General Hutton was dismissed by the Canadian Government during the course of the South African War which broke out in 1899, but most of his proposed changes were instituted by Major-General The Lord Dundonald, the last General Officer Commanding the Canadian Militia (1902-1904). The nucleus of permanent engineer, medical, army service corps, ordnance and other administrative services were created in 1903-1904.<sup>11</sup> Also in 1903 the Directors-General of Intelligence, Engineer Services, Medical and Ordnance Services were appointed to Militia Headquarters at Ottawa.<sup>12</sup> On 29 October 1903 the Governor in Council affirmed that the General Officer Commanding

was the principal adviser to the Minister of Militia and Defence and gave him "control" over the branches of the Adjutant General, the Director General of Military Intelligence, and Military Secretary, and "general supervision" over the other military branches, which now included those of the Quartermaster General, the Director General of Engineer Services, the Director General of Medical Services and the Director General of Ordnance Services. The Civil Branch headed by the Deputy Minister was now reduced to the Accountant's Branch, the Contracts Branch and the Chief Clerk's Branch (See Report No. 11).

#### Militia Council

11. The Dundonald Incident of 1904, which led the Canadian Government headed by Sir Wilfrid Laurier to dismiss the General Officer Commanding the Canadian Militia, fortuitously coincided with a drastic reorganization of both the British Army's structure and the War Office in London. Thenceforth the Secretary of State for war was advised by an Army Council of both military and civilian members, over which he presided. The post of Commander-in-Chief was abolished and the senior military adviser was Chief of the (new) General Staff Department. Oddly enough, this reorganization, recommended by Lord Esher's Committee, had been suggested by its naval member, Admiral Sir John Fisher, and was very similar to the set up that he would

shortly institute at the Admiralty after becoming First Sea Lord. The Canadian Government followed suit. The Militia Act of 1904 provided that the "Governor in Council may appoint a Militia Council to advise the Minister on all matters relating to the Militia which are referred to the Council by the Minister". Members were the Minister of Militia and Defence (President), Chief of the General Staff, Adjutant General, Quartermaster General, Master General of the Ordnance (military members), the Deputy Minister as a civilian member, and the Department Accountant as financial member. The appointment of Chief of the General Staff went to Brigadier-General Percy H.N. Lake of the British Army who was given the rank of Major-General in the Canadian Militia.<sup>13</sup> He returned to Canada for a second tour of duty, bringing with him a few British officers who would occupy key appointments in the new General Staff Branch.

12. Henceforth the regular (weekly or fortnightly) meetings of the Militia Council provided an opportunity for each of the military and civilian advisers of the Minister to obtain an understanding of the problems faced by the others and to thresh out problems common to all. The Quartermaster General was charged with the duty of "advising and assisting" the Deputy Minister "in making arrangements for contracts" for services that were the responsibility of his Branch. The Master General of the Ordnance was responsible for

"advising and assisting the Deputy Minister, Militia and Defence, in making contracts for guns, ammunition and works constructed under his control". (Report No. 11). The preparation of the estimates of the military branches was made the joint responsibility of the Military Members and the finance Member, who was directly responsible to the Minister and not in any way subordinate - at least in theory - to the Deputy Minister. In March 1927 there was a formal "re-allotment of duties" in the branches of the Deputy Minister and of what had become the Accountant and Paymaster General, increasing the responsibilities of the last named. Beginning with the first meeting of the Militia Council in 1906, however, the minutes recorded the Deputy Minister as being "Vice-President".

13. The Annual Report of the Department of Militia and Defence for 1905 stressed that "Co-operation had been the keynote of the work of the whole office (i.e. Militia Council) which has correspondingly profited thereby". By new Letters Patent dated 15 June 1905, King Edward VII constituted the "Office of Governor-General and Commander-in-Chief of the Dominion of Canada". In point of fact, however, actual command of the Canadian Militia resided in the Minister of Militia and Defence, if he should be a strong enough personality to dominate his Militia Council and treat its members merely as advisers where matters of policy were concerned. Whether the long-time

Liberal incumbent, Sir Frederick Borden (1896-1911), succeeded in this respect is something that might warrant investigation, but there is no doubt that his Conservative successor, the colourful Colonel Sam Hughes, acted as though he were the Commander-in-Chief and managed to get himself promoted to the honorary rank of Lieutenant-General during the course of the Great War, 1914-1919. Indeed Sam Hughes was so unimpressed with the Adjutant General and the Quartermaster General that he appointed his own special agents to do much of their work and he did not bother holding meetings of the Militia Council after 1914.<sup>14</sup>

#### Department of National Defence

14. Although Canada's major war effort was military, the creation and maintenance of a Canadian Expeditionary Force, a small Royal Canadian Navy had come into being in 1910.<sup>15</sup> Since Canadian delegates to Imperial Conferences had heretofore insisted that the tiny fisheries protective vessels could be considered a naval nucleus, it was probably natural that the new Department of the Naval Service should include several branches taken from the continuing Department of Marine and Fisheries. The Minister of Marine and Fisheries was given the Naval Service Portfolio, but each department had its own deputy minister. The appointment of Director of the

Naval Service went to Rear-Admiral C.E. Kingsmill, a Canadian who had recently retired from the Royal Navy and found employment with the Department of Marine and Fisheries.<sup>16</sup> Failure of the Royal Canadian Navy to grow must be blamed on circumstances, rather than its founders. Several air forces had a short existence but the Canadians who actually fought an enemy in the air were members of the Royal Flying Corps, Royal Naval Air Service or Royal Air Force. In June 1919 the Canadian Government established a seven-man Air Board to control civil and commercial flying and to co-operate with the Militia and Naval Service Departments "on all questions relating to the air defence of Canada".<sup>17</sup> On 18 February 1920 the Government authorized a Canadian Air Force on a non-permanent basis to give refresher training to wartime flyers.<sup>18</sup> The C.A.F. reported to the Air Board through its own Inspector General, Air Vice-Marshal Sir Willoughby G. Gwatkin,<sup>19</sup> who had been wartime Chief of the General Staff in Ottawa as well as being a career Major-General in the British Army.

15. During these months the appointment of C.G.S. had been vacant so that the commander of the Canadian Corps, General Sir Arthur Currie, might serve as Inspector General of Militia and Chief Military Counsellor. Shortly before his return to civilian life on 17 August 1920, Currie suggested to both the Prime Minister and the

Minster of Militia and Defence that a single Ministry of Defence should be created to include "the Militia, the Air Services and the Navy".<sup>20</sup> The Deputy Minister of Militia and Defence elaborated:

I think the time has come that a Department of National Defence, embracing the Naval Department, the Air Force, the Royal North West Mounted Police, and the Militia Department, should be formed. By such amalgamation a strong and experienced man could save between three and four million dollars a year by a thorough re-organization of the Departments above mentioned, by reducing (by amalgamation and absorption) the four different staffs now administering these different services - in reducing the Permanent Force and Permanent Staff of the Militia Department - the Staff and rank and file of the Air Force - and the Staff and ratings of the Naval Department....

You can easily imagine what a difference in the general administrative Staff such an amalgamation would make - One Deputy Minister for the whole - one Pay Department - one Purchasing Department - one Quartermaster General in charge of Demand and Supplies, etc. etc. The

overhead charges would thus be reduced to a minimum and the fact that the Royal North West Mounted Police will be administered by the same Ministerial Head would enable a reduction in the Permanent Force by an equal number, and enable the Government to deal with "Aid to the Civil Powers in time of Emergency" with a complete force under one control.<sup>21</sup>

On 19 December 1921 the newly appointed Chief of the General Staff, Major-General J.H. MacBrien, wrote along similar lines. He added:

In both Peace and War-in Training and Fighting - the Navy, Army and Air Force are mutually dependent on one another. This being the case, it is evident that some central Authority and Co-ordinating Body should be formed to direct the general allotment of the resources of the country between the various Services. Such a Central Authority would prevent competition for personnel and material, and avoid overlapping and waste. This very necessary co-ordinating Body can be supplied by the organization of the Ministry of Defence, which includes a Defence Council.<sup>22</sup>

The new Prime Minister, W.L. MacKenzie King, was sufficiently impressed - particularly by the promise that great economies would result - to include the proposal for a single Defence Department in the Speech from the Throne on 9 March 1922.<sup>23</sup> In anticipation of implementation the two portfolios of Militia and Defence and of the Naval Service were given to a single Minister, Hon. George P. Graham.<sup>24</sup>

16. Widespread criticism from all sides of the House of Commons caused Parliament to delete the Royal Canadian Mounted Police from the new Department of National Defence. Although the bill received Royal Assent on 28 June 1922, the act did not come into force until January 1923.<sup>25</sup> For some months, until sir Eugène Fiset was retired on medical grounds, there were two Deputy Ministers, and there were other instances of "administrative featherbedding". Order in Council P.C. 1252 of 20 June 1922 had specified that there should be a Defence Council "in order to facilitate the co-ordination of the several Departments and Services concerned". Undoubtedly the new Department would have to be based on the framework of the former Department of Militia and Defence, which was by far the largest, and it must have seemed eminently sensible that its Chief of the General Staff should become the Chief of Staff for the new combined headquarters and Inspector General of the Militia, Navy and Air

Force. His own General Staff Branch was headed by a Deputy Chief, Hon. Brigadier-General A.G.L. McNaughton, who was also Director of Military Training and Staff Duties (a Lieutenant-Colonel and a temporary Colonel). The administration and maintenance of a two-destroyer Navy and a tiny Air Force of civilian and obsolescent military aircraft were added to the responsibilities of the Adjutant General and Quartermaster General. The appointment of Master General of the Ordnance was suspended, supposedly for reasons of economy, and his duties divided between the G.S. and Q.M.G. Branches. The Director of the Naval Service, Captain Walter Hose, refused to accept subordination to Major-General MacBrien however, and succeeded in continuing his responsibilities for the Royal Canadian Navy to a succession of mediocre Ministers of National Defence. This story is well told, and in detail, by Professor James Eayrs in Volume I of In Defence of Canada, which is subtitled "From the Great War to the Great Depression" (Toronto, 1964). Eayrs suggests that Hose succeeded in foiling MacBrien because of the help received from the continuing Deputy Minister, Mr. G.J. Desbarats, who had earlier been Deputy Minister of the Naval Service. However, Mr. Desbarats was the first Deputy Minister to have a purely civilian background and it is possible that he was sufficiently Machiavelian in outlook to practise successfully the Roman dictum of divide and rule. In any event he did maintain the primacy of the Deputy

Minister and cause the Heads of the Military Branches to submit proposals to the Minister through him. Service integration was not helped by the long drawn out controversy between MacBrien and Hose, but the civilian Deputy Minister succeeded in going his own way unchallenged.

17. This last statement may be verified simply by outlining the story of the several attempts to alter the composition and role of the Defence Council. After an initial shakedown period, membership was as follows:

President

Minister of National Defence

Vice-President

Deputy Minister of National Defence

Members

Chief of Staff

Director of the Naval Service

Associate Members

Adjutant General

Quartermaster General

Director of the Royal Canadian Air Force

On 7 November 1925 the Chief of Staff proposed that the Adjutant General and Quartermaster General should become members of the Defence Council and that the Deputy Chief of the General Staff and the Judge Advocate General should become Associate Members. Ten days later the Deputy Minister advised the Adjutant General that the Minister (E.M. Macdonald) did not want to make any change. Mr. Macdonald was still recuperating from a serious illness and Professor Eayrs also suggests that he had no interest in military matters anyway (p. 250), but it is quite evident from the correspondence on the central registry file that the military believed that Desbarats was the obstructionist so they tried again on 4 December 1925. According to Desbarats' scribbled note, a decision was postponed by the Minister on 6 January 1926. Another scribbled note dated 29 June 1926 merely stated that the submission had been returned from the Minister's offices. By this time Major-General J.H. MacBrien had had just about enough. Early in 1927 he resigned. On 4 May the appointment of Chief of Staff was abolished. On 1 June Major-General H.C. Thacker became Chief of the General Staff as a stop-gap measure. Order in Council P.C. 372 of 27 March 1928 made the Director of the Naval Service, Commodore Walter Hose, also Chief of the Naval Staff.<sup>26</sup>

18. The first meeting of a Joint Staff Committee was held in General Thacker's office on Thursday, 27 October, to discuss two memoranda dealing with the defence of Canada.<sup>27</sup> This Committee, which met irregularly thereafter, was intended to act in an advisory capacity on matters concerning the co-operation of Naval, Military and Air Services of Canada. The C.G.S. acted as Chairman. The Chief of the Naval Staff and the Director of Civil Government Air Operations were members. The Director of Military Operations and Intelligence served as Secretary. The Commissioner of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police was an associate member and was to attend whenever matters of interest to him were scheduled for discussion. The Director, R.C.A.F. shortly became the Air Member. Terms of reference were promulgated:

The Joint Staff Committee is established for the purpose of co-ordinating effort in pursuit of a common policy and especially, to ensure the co-operation of the Forces (Sea, Land and Air) in the event of war or other emergency. To that end the Joint Staff Committee will advise on questions relating to organization, administration, and combined training, preparation for defence, procedure on mobilization, and on such other

questions as may be referred to it by the Naval, Militia or Air Services.<sup>28</sup>

19. The Signals Communication Sub-Committee, which had suspended operations in 1922, was revived with the earlier terms of reference and held a first meeting on 14 February 1928. Commander H.B. Taylor (Director of Naval Intelligence) presided. Colonel C.F. Hamilton (RCMP) was elected secretary. The Acting Director of Signals (Lieutenant-Colonel E. Forde), the R.C.A.F. Staff Officer (Intelligence) and the Chief Inspector of Radio (Department of the Interior) attended as members.<sup>29</sup>

20. On 15 November 1928 General Thacker suggested the formation of a Militia Board wherein the Adjutant General and the Quartermaster General might discuss purely militia problems with the Minister and the Deputy Minister. The military members already met frequently as a Militia Committee (under the authority of King's Regulations and Orders for the Canadian Militia (1926), Appendix 6, paragraph 4), but, when there should be strong differences of opinion, an unanimous recommendation could not be forwarded to the Minister. In Australia, according to Thacker, the Defence Minister presided over completely separate naval, military and air boards, while the Prime Minister presided at meetings of the Defence Council.<sup>30</sup> When Thacker's

memorandum was discussed by the Militia Committee on 20 December, the members agreed that the Minister should be asked to urge the Canadian Government to form a Cabinet Defence Committee, along the lines of the Committee of Imperial Defence in Great Britain and the Council of Defence in Australia.<sup>31</sup> Whatever may have been the views of the Minister of National Defence, Hon. J.L. Ralston, the Prime Minister was not interested in military matters. Nor did the Rt. Hon. W.L. Mackenzie King envisage any need for his government to worry about defence. General Thacker retired at the end of the month and was succeeded by a youthful Major-General A.G.L. McNaughton.

21. General McNaughton was merely Chief of the General Staff, but his widespread interests in tri-service matters and unquestioned ability caused him to work towards service integration with himself as Chief of Staff of a unified headquarters. There were merely single Medical and Pay Corps responsible to the Adjutant General and single Army Service Corps and Ordnance Corps similarly responsible to the Quartermaster General, although each of the three Services had its own signals and instructional personnel and there were separate naval and air sub-sections in such directorates as that of Military Operations and Intelligence.

22. McNaughton's memorandum of 22 January 1929 merely suggested that the composition of the Defence Council was satisfactory until such time as a Canadian Government should organize a "Defence Committee on lines similar to that of the Committee of Imperial Defence in London". The existing Defence Council in Ottawa was seldom required to meet and discuss administrative problems of the whole Department, but there was a need for "frequent meetings between the Honourable the Minister and the senior officers charged with the administration of the Sea, Land and Air Forces respectively". McNaughton suggested the creation of Naval, Militia and Air sub-committees of the Defence Council, each presided over by the Minister, or in his absence, the Deputy Minister. He suggested that the Adjutant General and the Quartermaster General be invited to attend meetings of the Air sub-committee when administrative matters were to be discussed. Otherwise it would consist of the Minister, Deputy Minister, Chief of the General Staff and Director of the R.C.A.F. However, he deliberately omitted suggesting the composition of a Naval sub-committee.<sup>32</sup>

23. Action had to wait for the victory of the Conservative Party in the general election of 1930 and the appointment of Hon. D.M. Sutherland as Minister of National Defence. The following procedure

was approved by Mr. Sutherland at a meeting of the Defence Council on 29 August 1930:

Questions of policy which affect only one particular branch of the three Services to be considered by the following sub-committees, and such other officers of the Department as the Minister may invite to attend when the matters under consideration involve the subjects with which they are charged under the present organization of the Department:

Naval Sub-Committee - Hon. the Minister; Deputy Minister; Chief of the Naval Staff.

Militia Sub-Committee - Hon. The Minister; Deputy Minister; Chief of the General Staff; Adjutant General, Quartermaster General.

Air Sub-Committee - Hon. the Minister; Deputy Minister; Chief of the General Staff; Director of the R.C.A.F.

All decisions reached by the Minister were to be recorded in the minutes of the Defence Council by its secretary and communicated to

all the members. Although there was provision that the Adjutant General and the Quartermaster General might be invited to attend meetings of the Naval and Air Sub-Committees, General McNaughton had not been able to have them made full members of the Defence Council.<sup>33</sup>

24. How and why General McNaughton became a trusted adviser of Prime Minister R.B. Bennett is told in some detail by Professor Eayrs. McNaughton was neither a politician nor civil servant and his official duties did not fully occupy him. As the depression deepened there was little to do militarily that was constructive and the restricted staff spent its time deciding how fewer dollars should be disbursed. A major stumbling block to change was removed by the retirement of Mr. G.J. Desbarats as Deputy Minister early in 1932. He was succeeded as Deputy Minister by a long time Militia officer Lieutenant-Colonel L.F. LaFleche.

25. By October 1932 McNaughton felt strongly enough entrenched to recommend drastic changes in the organization of the Department of National Defence. His draft Order in Council dated 24 October provided for a Chief of a Chief of Staff as the senior service representative. The Chief of the Naval Staff would be downgraded to Senior Naval Officer and the Director of the R.C.A.F. would be more

aptly described as Senior Air Officer. Should the Chief of Staff ever be a naval or flying officer, there should be a Chief of the General Staff. The Adjutant General and the Quartermaster General should also be full members of the Defence Council. The Deputy Minister should no longer be Vice-President of the Defence Council. The Financial Superintendent, newly added to the Department in 1931, should be a second civilian member of the Defence Council.<sup>34</sup>

26. McNaughton argued that it was absurd for the heads of the Armed Forces to have to present their advice to the Minister on professional matters through the Deputy Minister. The Deputy Minister should function merely as an administrative officer: "civil control of the armed forces which is essential must be exercised directly by a member of the Cabinet and not through a civil servant". Appointment of a Chief of Staff would co-ordinate the naval, militia and air services:

The situation in Canada is that we have a very large Land Force; a small but growing Air Force; and a very small Navy which is unlikely to expand into a High Seas Fleet.

The Air Force has been closely related to the Militia since its inception following the war, but the Navy, beginning in another Department of State and even after its incorporation in the Department of National Defence in 1923, has remained substantially separate and its senior officers have resisted co-ordination to the loss of efficiency in defence as a whole and against the dictates of economy in administration. It is important that a trend towards consolidation should be established, particularly as the role of the Canadian Navy in defence is in intimate co-operation with the Land and Air Forces and not as an independent force on the high seas.

McNaughton's memorandum stressed that there should be co-ordination only in the sphere of defence policy, there was no thought of having a Chief of Staff get involved in technical naval and air duties.<sup>35</sup>

27. Be that as it may, McNaught's proposals were rejected in toto, if only because neither the Deputy Minister nor the Chief of the Naval Staff were interested in a lesser status. A counter-attack launched in 1934 by a new Chief of the Naval Staff, Captain P.W. Nelles, stressed that co-ordination must be brought about by the political Minister or his civilian Deputy Minister. Co-operation

could be achieved through meetings of the Defence Council or the Joint Staff Committee. No action was taken.<sup>36</sup> On 1 July 1935 McNaught was seconded to become President of the National Research Council. He was succeeded as C.G.S. by Major-General E.C. Ashton.

28. A few months later a general election brought into power a Liberal Government headed by the Rt. Hon. W.L. Mackenzie. Because of the belligerent foreign policies being pursued by Japan, Italy and Germany, the new Canadian Government was forced to embark on a modest rearmament programme. A most important step forward, even if it did not make much of an impression, was the establishment of a Cabinet Defence Committee on 20 August 1936. The Prime Minister was Chairman. The Ministers of Justice, Finance, and National Defence were members. The Committee could "call before it any official or employee of the Government and any officer of the Naval, Military or Air Forces of Canada, whose duty it shall be to afford the Committee every assistance and all information in connection with any subject in regard to which the Committee may desire to be informed".<sup>37</sup>

29. The new look, for what it was worth, emphasized R.C.A.F. expansion. On 27 May 1936 the Senior Air Officer, Air Vice-Marshal G.M. Croil, argued, in a letter addressed to the Deputy Minister, that, unless he were given full membership in the Defence Council,

R.C.A.F. requirements and views could not be submitted to the Minister as "clearly and convincingly" as those of the Navy and Militia. Rearmament necessitated closer co-operation between the Services and an "equal footing" as regards membership on the Defence Council.<sup>38</sup> Agreement having been obtained, after initial but mild opposition by the C.G.S., Order in Council P.C. 1742 of 17 July 1936 altered the composition of the Defence Council to read as follows:

President

Minister of National Defence

Vice-President

Deputy Minister of National Defence

Members

Chief of the General Staff

Director of the Naval Service and Chief of the Naval Staff

Senior Air Officer, R.C.A.F.

Associate Members

Adjutant General

Quartermaster General

Master General of the Ordnance

## Judge Advocate General

30. The Joint Staff Committee had already submitted a brief to the Minister, Hon. Ian MacKenzie, entitled "A Canadian Organization for the Higher Direction of National Defence". Largely the work of its secretary, Lieutenant-Colonel M.A. Pope, it criticized the Defence Council as being too large, unwieldy and militia based. Its recommendation was to abolish Associate Membership and make the resulting Defence Council a truly consultative body in matters of general policy. Purely professional advice would be tendered to the Minister by the existing Joint Staff Committee, which would be more appropriately named "Chiefs of Staff Committee" and given a full-time secretary. Its detailed studies would be done by inter-service sub-committee. Heads of branches of each service should meet as the Naval, Militia and Air Sub-Committee, which had been approved in principle as early as 29 August 1930, but not with the Minister and/or Deputy Minister in attendance.<sup>39</sup>

31. Croil had approved this submission on the understanding that action would be taken to establish the R.C.A.F. as a separate service and of equal status to the Navy and Militia.<sup>40</sup> The Joint Staff Committee appears to have held 11 meetings in 1937 and 20 during 1938. The military members of the Defence Council met 20 times

during 1937 and 50 times during 1938.<sup>41</sup> Only on 12 December 1938 did the Joint Staff Committee finally agree that the title Senior Air Officer should be changed to Chief of the Air Staff in order to indicate the "complete equality of status" between the heads of the three Services. This was immediately approved by the Minister of National Defence.<sup>42</sup> On 7 January 1939 he approved the redesignation of the Joint Staff Committee as the Chiefs of Staff Committee.<sup>43</sup>

32. From time to time small ad hoc committee consisting of officers of the three services employed in operational of officers of the three services employed in operational planning had been formed to advise the Joint Staff Committee on such matters as (1) maintenance of neutrality, (2) defence of Canada, (3) coast defence, (4) anti-aircraft defence, (5) war rooms and (6) Hudson Bay.<sup>44</sup> On 8 March 1939 Colonel Pope suggested that this confusing hodge-podge be replaced by a standing Joint Planning Sub-Committee of the Chiefs of Staff Committee.<sup>45</sup> Action was taken within the month. Membership was to include the Director of Naval Intelligence and Plans, the Director of Military Operations and Intelligence and Plans, the Director of Military Operations and Intelligence and the Air Staff Officer. Other officers might be co-opted as associate members.<sup>46</sup> This was merely a copy of existing British practice.

33. So was the proliferation of interdepartmental committees formed in the spring of 1938 to prepare for the possibility of Canada becoming involved in a major war. No publicity was given to the fact that they were sub-committees of the Cabinet Defence Committee. There was no proper secretariat, but Lieutenant-Colonel Pope was selected by the several committee chairmen as "co-ordinating secretary" and was made a ex officio member of each committee.<sup>47</sup>

### Second World War

34. When the time of crisis came in August 1939 the small and ill-defined National Defence Headquarters was a collection of impressive sounding titles, but still predominantly militia. The General Staff Branch had Directors of Military Training and Staff Duties, Military Operations and Intelligence, Signals, and Historical Section. The Adjutant General had a Director of Organization and Personal Services, a Director of Pay Services, a Director General of Medical Services, and an Officer in Charge of Records. The Quartermaster General had Director of Engineer Services and Supplies and Transport, and an Officer Administering, Canadian Army Veterinary Corps. The Master General of the Ordnance had Directors of Mechanization and Artillery of Ordnance Services, and of Clothing, Equipment and Manufacturing Establishments.

35. The Chief of the Naval Staff had a Deputy Chief and Directors of Naval Intelligence (R.N. Officer), Personnel, Plans, Naval Engineering and Stores (civilian) and a Naval Secretary. Directors of Operations and of Mercantile Movements were appointed for the emergency.

36. The Chief of the Air Staff was assisted by either Senior Air Staff Officers or Directors for each of Air Operations, Plans and Organizations; Air Staff Duties and Service Training; Air Personnel; Air Personnel Training; Air Force Manning; Air Development; Works and Buildings; Air Equipment. There also were an Air Personnel Staff Officer and a Chief Aeronautical Engineer.<sup>48</sup>

37. Expansion was fast and furious, especially during the summer of 1940, but apart from the creation of a single Canadian Dental Corps it was destined to create a completely self sufficient Navy, Army and Air Force.

38. This trend towards autonomy had picked up impetus during the course of a meeting of the Defence Council on 12 September 1938, when the C.G.S. had complained about having to approach the Minister through the Deputy Minister on purely service matters. In the event of emergency such delays could be costly. According to the minutes

of the meeting, the Deputy Minister "concurred in the views of the Chief of the General Staff as to members of Council having direct access to the Minister, provided the Deputy Minister is kept fully informed".<sup>49</sup> On 8 September 1939 the Deputy Minister went on sick leave and was replaced by two Associate Acting Deputy Ministers: Lieutenant-Colonel H.S. DesRosiers for the Militia and Lieutenant-Colonel K.S. MacLachlan for the Naval and Air Services. On adjourning a meeting of the Defence Council on 14 September, the Minister said "that he wished the Members of Council to feel free to come to him at any time either at his office or in the Chateau Laurier". This invitation included Associate Members. A third Associate Acting Deputy Minister, industrialist J.S. Duncan, was appointed for Air on 11 April 1940. Hon. C.G. Power became Associate Minister of National Defence and Minister of National Defence for Air on 23 May 1940. On 12 July 1940 Hon. Angus L. Macdonald became Minister of National Defence for Naval Services.<sup>50</sup>

39. New men came into what were virtually separate departments, located in different areas of Ottawa, in such increasing numbers to get on with the war in 1940 and managed to keep so busy that the traditional military-civilian struggle for control of defence matters got mislaid. On 12 August 1940 a new and busy Minister of National Defence, Hon. J.L. Ralston, agreed with his new Chief of the General

Staff, Major-General H.D.G. Crerar, that it did not make good sense to continue the Deputy Minister as Vice President of the Defence Council. Order in Council P.C. 4737 of 13 September 1940 detailed membership as follows:

- Chairman - The Minister of National Defence
  
- Vice-Chairman - The Associate Minister of National Defence  
The Minister of National Defence for Naval Services  
The Minister of National Defence for Air
  
- Members - The Chief of the Naval Staff  
The Chief of the General Staff  
The Chief of the Air Staff  
The Associate Acting Deputy Minister (Naval Service)  
The Associate Acting Deputy Minister (Militia Service)  
The Associate Acting Deputy Minister (Air Service)
  
- Secretary - To be appointed by the Minister

Subsequent changes were made to reflect changes in personnel and titles of the civilian members: after 1 September 1942, for example there were two Deputy Ministers (Army) and one for each of Navy and Air. None of the Assistant Deputy Ministers appointed to share the increasing administrative and financial burdens of each wartime department acquired membership. The cumbersome Defence Council met even less frequently as time passed.<sup>51</sup>

40. During the critical months of 1940 separate Navy, Army and Air Councils, similar in scope to those first recommended in 1930, came into being. Order in Council P.C. 2665 of 20 June 1940 created an Air Council to "deal with matters relating exclusively to the Air Service...to this extent only would be charged with duties vested in the Defence Council by Order in Council P.C. 1252 of 20th June, 1922". The Minister should be President and the Deputy Minister (Air) should be Vice-President. Members were to be:

Chief of the Air Staff

Air Member for Aeronautical Engineering and Supply

Air Member for Air Staff

Air Member for Organization and Training

Air Member for Personnel

The Order in Council specified that "upon the termination of the office of Minister of National Defence for Air, the said Air Council shall be dissolved". Its composition was altered on occasion to reflect changes in the organization of Air Force Headquarters, but an attempt in 1942 to reconstitute it on permanent lines similar to that in Great Britain was abandoned on 24 December because of legal technicalities.\*

41. A similar Army Committee, intended to meet at least bi-weekly, was authorized by Order in Council P.C. 4737 of 13 September 1940. On 18 October 1940 the Hon. J.L. Ralston agreed that Army Council would be a more appropriate name. He was President, but there was no Vice-President. Membership include the Chief of the General Staff, Adjutant General, Quartermaster General of the Ordnance and the Associate Acting Deputy Minister of National Defence (Militia Service). In practice, however, the Army Council was little used, because successive Ministers preferred to discuss matters at morning meetings with the heads of the military branches. The latter continued to meet informally by themselves as a Military Members

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\* Although such a change would allow the Chief of the Air Staff and the council to issue orders and regulations, thus releasing the Minister from much routine work, it would have resulted in extensive changes to Kings Regulations for the Royal Air Force. The Air Council discussed the proposal on 21 Dec 42 and shelved it because of "constitutional difficulties".<sup>52</sup>

Committee. The Vice Chief of the General Staff, an appointment created in 1941 to lessen the work load of the C.G.S., attended both these types of meeting but was not made a member of the Army Council.<sup>53</sup>

42. A similar Naval Council met for the first time on 19 September 1940. It consisted of the Minister, Deputy Minister, Chief of the Naval Staff, Deputy Chief of the Naval Staff, Director of Naval Intelligence and the Director of Naval Plans (secretary). By March 1941 it was meeting once a week. In February 1942 it was replaced by a Naval Board, intended to advise the Minister on purely naval matters. Although not a member, the Minister attended many of meetings. Membership included the Chief of the Naval Staff, Vice Chief of the Naval Staff, Chief of Naval Personnel, Chief of Naval Equipment and Supply, Chief of Naval Engineering and Construction, and the Deputy Minister. Originally it met as often as twice a week. After April 1943 it met less than once a week, because it decided not to discuss administrative trivia. During February 1944 a Deputy Minister's Advisory Committee was established to screen items placed on the Board's agenda. The Chief of the Naval Staff was not a member of this Committee, but the other members of the Board were. This Advisory Committee gradually took over the work of the Naval Board, which held no meetings from 30 October 1944 to 11 February 1945.<sup>54</sup>

43. The work of getting on with the war, as far as the average citizen was concerned, was accomplished by the Cabinet War Committee, which met at least once a week in the East Block and whose decisions were merely ratified by the Government. The three Ministers of National Defence were members and the Chiefs of Staff were generally in attendance. Preliminary work was done earlier by the Chiefs of Staff Committee, where it had been discussed by the Service and political heads, without any help from the Deputy Ministers who were effectively relegated to the role of administrative "pen pushers" while the uniformed chiefs had become truly "big wheels". In other words, there had been a tremendous, if unconscious, shift in the civilian-military struggle for control of Canada's defence machinery.

44. This report was the last done by Doctor R. Mackay Hitsman before his retirement in 1967. It was found among his papers after Dr. Hitsman's death, and annotated by W.O. P.R. Marshall, who had assisted in the preparation of the report.

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Director

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