

rolls had been examined in Ottawa each Commanding Officer would be told the number to be enlisted from his unit.

The impracticability of selecting 25,000 individuals by this cumbersome process was soon realized, and on 10 August Districts regained their normal position in the pattern of command when they were told the divisional formations and units that each must furnish. This enabled district headquarters to allot recruiting quotas to Militia unit commanders; but three days later, as though determined to keep matters confused, Ottawa modified its instructions. Since the exact allotment would "necessarily depend on the numbers volunteering", the table showing the divisional composition and the areas from which units were to be drawn "should be looked upon in the light of a general guide only.<sup>4</sup> Instructions, often conflicting, continued to flow from Militia Headquarters not only to commanders of Divisions and Military Districts but direct to other levels of command down to units. When a divisional commander protested "that orders have so far been given out not only by wire, but also apparently through the telephone, by Heads of Departments at Headquarters to myself as well as to Heads of Departments of this Division",<sup>5</sup> he was voicing the concern of those who repeatedly found that military activities of which they had no knowledge were taking place within their commands on instructions from Ottawa.

"In a short time", proudly declared the Minister of Militia, "we had the boys on the way for the first contingent, whereas it would have taken several weeks to have got the word around through the ordinary channels . . . The contingent was practically on the way to Europe before it could have been mobilized under the ordinary plan."<sup>6</sup> This disparagement of the "ordinary plan" was scarcely justified; normal military channels of communication properly used could have carried the warning in a matter of hours, not weeks. Indeed, once the confusion caused by the first dramatic but irregular "call to arms" subsided, most of the volunteers joined through existing militia units in virtually the manner prescribed by the pre-war scheme.

While the troops for the first contingent were being recruited, the British Government had "gratefully accepted" an offer of four additional Canadian units of a thousand men each.<sup>7</sup> The proposal had been enthusiastically, if somewhat prematurely, relayed to London by the Governor General after attending a meeting of the Cabinet during which the Minister of Militia referred to offers received from three Provinces to provide battalions. These failed to materialize, Sir Robert Borden reporting to the Acting Canadian High Commissioner in London, Mr. George Perley: "New Brunswick entirely repudiates having made any such offer and Manitoba and Calgary find themselves financially unable to undertake what was suggested rather than offered."<sup>8</sup> The proposal that stood was that by Captain A. Hamilton Gault, a Montreal veteran of the South African War, to raise an infantry battalion of ex-soldiers and to contribute \$100,000 towards the cost. The battalion, named Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry after Her Royal Highness, the daughter of the Governor General, was speedily recruited in Ottawa, its ranks

being filled by veterans from all parts of Canada. Lt.-Col. F. D. Farquhar (Coldstream Guards), Military Secretary to the Governor General, was appointed Commanding Officer. As will be seen, this unique venture in mobilization was to pay high dividends. In three weeks from the date of its authorization the regiment was ready to sail, and it embarked at Montreal on 28 August. Admiralty convoy restrictions held the unit impatiently in Canada, and it crossed with the First Contingent late in September. The *Patricias* landed in France on 21 December and entered the line as part of the 80th Brigade, 27th Division, on the night of 6-7 January 1915—eight weeks before the 1st Canadian Division was committed to action.

No further offers of formed units were entertained, for having learned that it cost a million dollars to equip and maintain a regiment of a thousand men for a year in active service, the Government (as pointed out by the Prime Minister to Mr. Perley) decided "absolutely to reject all such offers in the future unless the person, city or province making the offer is prepared not only to equip but maintain the proposed force".\* When the War Office ventured to inquire about the Governor General's offer, it was informed that two of the battalions "have been absorbed by the Division; and two have meantime been merged in The Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, now in process of being formed."<sup>10</sup>

### The First Contingent at Valcartier

The summons sent out on 6 August 1914 by the Minister of Militia had named the place of mobilization as Valcartier, sixteen miles north-west of Quebec City. The first group of volunteers reached the new camp on 18 August, and by 8 September the influx, carried in one hundred special trains, had raised the strength to its maximum of 32,665.

The new campsite lay along the east bank of the Jacques Cartier River. From a belt of woodland beside the stream sandy flats reached back some two miles to a tree-covered ridge rising abruptly a thousand feet above the valley. Occasional patches of swamp and timber intruded on the open fields of small farms, granted originally to British soldiers after the capture of Quebec. The transformation of this area in less than a month into an organized military establishment accommodating more than 30,000 men was a striking testimonial to the foresight and unbounded enthusiasm and driving power of the Minister of Militia—who having fathered the project personally saw it through to completion. In 1912 he had taken steps to acquire the site for a central training area for the Militia of the province; and his decision to concentrate the Canadian Expeditionary Force there necessitated the purchase of additional land after war broke out, the eventual area of the camp reaching 12,428 acres.

\* Not quite within this category was the acceptance of \$150,000 subscribed by fifteen public-spirited Canadian citizens for the purchase in the United States of machines and vehicles to equip the Automobile Machine Gun Brigade No. 1, a unit of nine officers and 114 other ranks.