

Government to the Press, confess to some feeling of surprise when we find even so powerful a journal as this deliberately criticising and, to some extent, condemning, the present military system of Prussia.

The subject of standing armies and their oppressive weight on the resources of all European countries has been recently brought forward by a member of the Austrian Legislature, Dr. Fischer, who is of opinion that it would be by no means impossible to induce the Great Powers of Europe to agree to a general and proportionate reduction of existing armaments. Such a task would not be so chimerical as was, a few years ago, the idea of international arbitration; and yet this has already proved a success in more than one instance. A conference of members of the various legislatures is proposed, and these should be invited to pass two resolutions; one stating the principle of smaller armaments in time of peace, the other pledging each member to urge his native legislature to action in the matter. Nor is this all. Dr. Fischer sees no reason why a convention should not eventually be appointed by the various States, whose duty it should be to agree to a systematic plan of reduction. The Austrian Press has received these propositions with some favour, and they seem to be distinctly gaining ground in other parts of the continent.

After the establishment of peace in 1815, large standing armies were for a long time the rule. They were hardly diminished during the third and fourth decade of the century; but then some relaxation took place. At the time of the Crimean War, when three Great Powers were engaged in serious conflict, there were far fewer men under arms than in these present days of peace. It was in 1866 that the general, and, indeed, nearly universal, impetus towards huge armaments was given. Prussia had, of course, long before formed an exception to this rule, but now, less than ten years after Sadowa was fought, we find every State except England, Sweden, and one or two smaller countries adopting the principle of compulsory and more or less universal armament. That system is by no means as yet complete, as in France for instance, it will be, in all probability, years before anything approaching to perfection is universally arrived at. Yet already the pressure is beginning to be felt unbearable. The withdrawal of young men from agricultural, industrial, and manufacturing pursuits for three years represents vast material loss, which, although it does not appear in a pecuniary form in budgets, is all but intolerable. Of course, there is no doubt that every man owes it to his country to devote himself to her protection in the hour of need; but such tremendous and apparently unnecessary sacrifices as those now demanded from the populations of Europe, even in times of peace, are, no doubt, causing deep anxiety both to rulers and to ruled.

Our German contemporary fully recognises the patriotic and even moral advantages which are gained by the duty of universal military service, but contends that few persons have a clear idea of what the theory and practice of that service is. A distinction of great importance should be clearly drawn between the duty of every citizen to defend his country and the demand that every one should become a skilled professional soldier. For the former some preparation is, of course, required; for the latter not less than three years' continuous service is deemed requisite. The *Gazette* states that a larger percentage than formerly of young men capable of bearing arms is

absorbed by the Army, but neither the resources of Germany nor of any other State are sufficient to carry out the principle in its entirety. Even still a certain proportion of Germans who are not bodily unfit for service cannot be received into the army. "It might perhaps be asserted" (we quote the actual words of the *Gazette*), "that the principle of universal military service would be most completely carried out if the regular professional army were made smaller in order to save the expenses which would be necessary to introduce an easier and shorter training for the whole people without any exception." Here we have clearly set before us the idea of a diminished standing army, so far as the term is to be used of purely professional soldiers, and the suggestion of a much less burdensome period of compulsory service. It surprises us not a little, by the way, to hear on such excellent authority that the full system has by no means been carried out in Prussia.

We cannot help pointing out that, in many respects, the plan thus sketched out resembles our English system. We have not, indeed, compulsion in any form, but we have in the Militia and Volunteers very considerable numbers of men who receive such an amount of training as would fit them, in the hour of danger, to undertake the duty of patriotic citizens and to protect their country. Of course they require, in order to be come thoroughly efficient, considerable further training; but this they would not be without in the day of necessity. The experience of the American War showed how soon men of superior cultured intelligence become thorough soldiers. According to the views enunciated by the *Cologne Gazette*, the idea of the first importance is a nucleus army of soldiers, who make their vocation of a lifetime; and if this be the best method, our late War Secretary's theory of short service in such an Army as ours would be an inferior method. We should rather induce professional soldiers to remain in the Army as long as possible, and trust to the half trained, or less trained, Militia or Volunteers to increase the ranks of an effective force in times of war. To make such a system perfect, however, it is evident that it would be advisable, if not necessary, to adopt some form of compulsory service for the reserves; and this might perhaps be contrived without going the length of universal conscription. Every class of society might be made subject to ballot for the Militia; and a strict system of inspection being adopted for the Volunteers, a certificate of real efficiency might be granted, which should give immunity from service to those drawn for it. This would be, in many respects, the method recommended by the *Cologne Gazette*, save in the one matter of universal compulsion.

When, a few years ago, it was suggested that the Great Powers should reduce their armaments, a decided refusal came from Prussia, which, in those days, was the only State that had adopted universal compulsory service. Our contemporary, with considerable naïveté, concludes this important article with the following words—"At that time, by consenting to such a proposal (reduction of the Army) we should have perhaps surrendered an advantage; now, however, that the universal service has been adopted by all the Great Powers of the continent, all are put upon an equal footing." Or, in other words, as Prussia has gained all she can by the system, she will practically give it up if the other States of Europe will do the same.

Deak, the Hungarian statesman, is seriously ill.

### The Canadian Centenary.

(From the *Daily News*, Dec. 18.)

We announced the other day that the third Lord Dorchester and died in the sixty-fourth year of his age. It could not be added that the deceased peer held a very noteworthy place among his contemporaries. The best and worst that could be said of him might be couched in terms similar to those used by Dante when he beheld the multitude "who lived without blame and without praise." Yet few members of the peerage are so undistinguished that their family annals do not sometimes furnish material for useful comment, and to this rule the Dorchester Peerage is no exception. In this year and at this season it is alike easy and natural to recall the events in which the founder of this noble family played a conspicuous and glorious part.

A century ago, in the month of December, Brigadier General Sir Guy Carleton, created Baron Dorchester eleven years afterwards, was engaged in defending Canada against the forces of the United Colonies which, before a year elapsed, assumed the title and position of the United States of America. He was the third English Governor of Canada, having been appointed to that office in 1761. He conciliated the colonists who had passed from under the rule of France to that of England by the mildness of his administration. It was owing to his recommendation that the Quebec Act became law in 1774—an Act which directed that the old French laws should continue in force, that judges conversant with them should be appointed from among the colonists, that the French language should be used in courts of justice, and that Roman Catholics and Protestants should enjoy equal civil rights. This Act, which was one of the wisest and most enlightened of those to which George III. gave his assent, was violently denounced, because it permitted the French colonists to be subject to their own laws, instead of compelling them to submit to the laws of England. When the United Colonies formulated their grievances in a Declaration of Independence, it was stated that, among other pieces of intolerable tyranny, George III. had combined with others given his assent to "Acts of pretended legislation," one of which had for object "abolishing the free system of English laws in a neighbouring Province, establishing therein an arbitrary government, and enlarging its boundaries, so as to render it at once an example and fit instrument for introducing the same absolute rule into these Colonies." The representatives of the United Colonies first appealed to the Canadians to unite with them; and, on this appeal meeting with no response, they sent an army to invade Canada and thereby propagate the principle of liberty. The Canadians, indeed, had no cause to complain and no desire to change their condition. With the Quebec Act they were attached to the Governor. The service which they rendered to England was perfect freedom compared with what they had been obliged to render to France, and they shrewdly argued that if they must submit to laws passed in a distant land, there was no reason to believe that the laws of a Continental Congress meeting at Philadelphia would be better suited to their wants and more agreeable to the wishes than the laws proceeding from the Parliament of Great Britain.

The first step towards obtaining possession of Canada was made by Colonel Ethau Allen, who captured Fort Tycondoraga. Colonel Allen was a turbulent spirit who had stirred up sedition among the Green