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CANADA AND THE NAVY.

IN this issue appears a parliamentary return which has recently aroused a great deal of interest in Britain. At first sight, matters relating to the Royal Navy may seem of sufficiently remote interest to the majority of the officers and men of the Canadian militia, but a little reflection should prove that nothing can be of deeper interest to us than the condition of the sea power of Britain, to which we owe our existence as a British colony in times past, and in close conjunction with which our military forces would have to work in the event of war. From the moment of the commencement of hostilities to the firing of the last gun, we would be drawing arms, ammunition, stores of every sort, over sea; would not the preservation of the sea-routes over which these would come be a matter of the first importance to us? Further, in certain contingencies, our lakes might require to be held; and in that event the Royal Navy would have to cover our frontier from Cornwall to Port Arthur. There would be an enormous difference between the task the defenders of Canada would have to face if they simply had to keep several river frontiers, with the Union Jack supreme on the Great Lakes, their own flanks guarded and those of an enemy threatened by the fleet, and the task of defending the country with the Great Lakes held by the enemy, with the defenders' own flanks threatened by water-borne armies. Our militia system, it can never be too often repeated, is one link in the chain of Imperial defence; there is the navy, the Imperial army, and local defence. The last-named will be effective in proportion as it works well with the other components of the system. It is for that reason that Canadians are interested in the navy, which day by day protects their sea-borne commerce, and which in time of war would be of enormous importance to them.

Coincident with the interest created by this important return comes a series of comments made by service papers upon the interview with Mr. H. J. Wickham, the honorary secretary of the Toronto branch of the Navy League, which was published in The London Daily Mail. All express or imply gratitude to Mr. Wickham for his entry into the field. The suggestion as to the existence of an effective reserve in the Canadian and Newfoundland fishermen and sailors is greeted with much pleasure, though there are

signs that even yet the people of the Mother Country do not quite realize how large the supply of Canadian seamen is. One criticism passed is that the armament of the proposed subsidized vessels would be so slight as to leave them "at the mercy of any cruisers of equal speed." The critic has failed to recognize that it is contemplated by Mr. Wickham that the cruisers of the Royal Navy proper will be able to take care of the cruisers of other countries, but that the auxiliary navy which he advocates is an answer to the ships of a similar class which are now being largely subsidized and organized in the mercantile marine of foreign nations.

A FIELD FOR ENTERPRISE.

A FIELD for recruiting which should present peculiar attractions for officers of the city battalions at least is to be found in the Boys' Brigades which are winning ground so rapidly in many parts of the Dominion. On the face of it, the boys turned out by this system should make recruits of the most desirable class. An eighteen-year-old lad, who knows his squad drill and manual pretty thoroughly and has some conception of company movements, and who in addition has learned to believe that obedience to superiors, courtesy, and respectability of language and behavior are qualities to be prized rather than ridiculed, should make a most acceptable recruit, and a company drawn from such a source should bring credit to the service. Many of these lads do go into the militia when the time comes for them to leave the brigade, and it is to be deplored that there is no systematic means of encouraging the completion of the training begun in the brigade in the ranks of the men who are training to be the defenders of the country. The matter is one which can be viewed from the standpoint either of the militia or of the Boys' Brigade. The militia would find in the brigade a recruiting field of the most excellent description; and the brigade, which has shown its appreciation of military training and its sense of the value of military virtues, would know that the training which it imparts would be carried on in a wider field and for purposes of a patriotism as pure as is to be found anywhere in the country.

In Britain, which is manifesting a remarkable activity at present in military matters, this aspect of the work has been perceived, and the Boys' Brigade has been the object of a great deal of attention from military authorities, from the highest down. The Commander-in-Chief, Lord Wolseley, finds time to attend important gatherings of these youthful troops, and regular militia and volunteer officers all show great interest in the work. One fashion, which they follow may well be commended to the attention of officers of our militia: When an officer goes to inspect a body of the boys, he takes care to wear full uniform, so as to make as attractive an appearance as possible, and has a brilliant staff to accompany him. Not only does it impress the boys, but it also exalts their sense of the importance of their organization.

Why cannot a close connection be established between individual corps and certain specified portions of the brigade? Why cannot even individual companies establish friendly relations with individual companies of the boys, encourage them, occasionally have an officer in full uniform inspect or drill the lads, occasionally have a non-com. assist in the drill, and keep track of the membership so as to see that as many as possible graduate from the junior organization to the company? A measure which should have an excellent effect would be to accept a certificate from the drill instructor of a brigade company as equivalent to passing through the recruit class of the militia battalion, provided the possessor joins within a reasonable time. The establishment of such a brotherhood of militia corps and Boys' Brigades would entail some work, but should produce results well worth the exertion.