

while keenly alive to the interests of the country thinks this interest will be best served by reorganizing the army, choosing the officers by selection, or as Cardwell is as great a philosopher as Darwin, by natural affinity, possibly, and by a compulsory militia law. But we cannot understand how the burthen of military service will be equalized under such a system (for let us at once state that while our militia law is compulsory it is only so for the proper regulation of drafting fair quotas in the case of necessity, and as long as our ranks are filled by Volunteers will not be resorted to at all), while in England the distinction in society would make compulsory service peculiarly hard. The Volunteer organization, on the contrary, by leaving a choice of corps to the individual, and enabling him to terminate his service when inclined, provides for the rapid leavening of the mass of the people with trained soldiers as the *Broad Arrow* admits, and is, therefore, the most effective form any organization can take to produce effective soldiers.

We do not believe the annals of history contains more fearful accounts of human suffering or disaster than were crowded into the past month of October as occurring in the North Western States. Parts of Wisconsin, Illinois and Michigan have been swept with destruction by fearful prairie and bush fires; those have been especially severe and disastrous on the west shore of Lake Michigan, involving fearful loss of human life. On Sunday, 8th October, a tornado of fire about ten miles in width swept over the lake shore destroying forest, field, houses, mills, cattle and human beings indiscriminately within its path; in one village alone the charred remains of 475 persons were buried, many of them past recognition, but fearful as all this was, it was exceeded in horror by the devastation of the settlement known as Williamson's Mill, which contained a population of nearly one hundred souls. The settlement contained only four buildings, a shingle mill, boarding house, store, and barn; a good many of the mill hands lived in neighboring towns and as some danger was apprehended several did not return as was customary on Sunday evening. There appears to have been about sixty-five or seventy persons in the settlement which was situated in a clearing of five or six acres. Three brothers of the name of Williamson owned the mill, their aged father and mother living with them. Early on Sunday night a terrific tornado drove the fire, which had been smouldering in the woods, in a sheet of flame right on the settlement; it was at once evident that no property could be saved and the terrified crowd were advised to break for the timber, a belt of which around the clearing had been carefully burned out for such a contingency, but they seem to have got panic stricken and rushed to a pit, about six feet wide and two deep, in the centre of the clearing;

here forty seven wretched creatures crowded on one another were literally roasted to death, the light clothing of the women helping to accelerate their misery. The blacksmith of the settlement perished in endeavouring to save his wife and three children while eight or nine lost their lives by suffocation in a well, five or six heavy sleepers darted into the timber and with their faces to the ground escaped that death which the writhing mass of human beings were undergoing within 100 yds. of them. To any person who has not seen a bush fire it is almost impossible to convey an idea of how hopelessly and rapidly a settlement would be involved, nor what distance fire will travel with a gale of wind. Twelve months ago last August this vicinity was swept by one of those fires, and a village over a mile distant from the nearest wood totally destroyed; in loss of life, however, it differed from the Wisconsin fires, not more than two or three people were suffocated, while in Williamson's settlement alone, 59 persons perished, the aged mother and one son of the proprietor's family alone being saved. The strangest part of the transaction is the panic which seized the people; one of the survivors labored hard to separate them and get them to the bush, but they clung together and perished, (a sad example of want of presence of mind), in the sight of safety. So fierce was the fire that the gallant fellow had to desist the flesh being burned off his hands and face, his clothes on fire and himself utterly unable to do anything although his betrothed wife, a beautiful girl, was in the doomed pit, and he was barely saved by throwing himself into a well. Impelled by the wind, the fire ran along the ground destroying everything in its way and leveling the gigantic forest trees as if they were reeds.

The following review of the season's military operations is particularly gratifying from the fact that the excellence of the system under which our military force has been organized is forcing itself on the attention of that portion of the Canadian press which hitherto were doubtful as to the success of the experiment. The much abused Militia Bill has vindicated its claim to be considered as the highest effort of statesmanship of the present day, and the people of Canada cannot be too thankful that they had a man who so thoroughly understood their social and political requirements as Sir G. E. Cartier. The following is from the *Toronto Telegraph* of 7th November:—

"Let croakers croak as they please, but it is an undeniable fact that we possess a military organization which is in a thoroughly efficient state. From the official report of last summer's campaigning, we learn that in the 16 day camps (Districts 1 to 9 inclusive) 22,544 officers and men and 1,900 horses were exercised; in the 3 day camps, 5,210 officers and men and 318 horses. In addition 1,700 garrison artillery have done duty at forts and garrisons, 3 artillery batteries on gun boats, and the Grand Trunk Brigade,

2,155 strong, at the respective headquarters. At Niagara on the immediate frontier, a force of 4,743 men, with three field batteries (12 guns), three squadrons of cavalry and 605 horses from Military District No. 2, under command of Lt. Col. Durie, D. A. G., was concentrated in twelve hours with ample supplies for sixteen days and there formed into a division. At Laprairie, in front of Montreal, the corps from Military Districts No. 5 and 6 being brought together, were formed into another division of 5,310 men under command of Lt. Col. O. Smith, D.A.G., C.M.G., with one field battery, two squadrons of cavalry and 254 horses—they were concentrated with almost equal rapidity and trained for a similar period. Early on the morning of the 8th July, this division left camp and crossed the river St. Lawrence to Montreal (the men carrying one day's provisions) being there joined by the Montreal Garrison Artillery and two battalions of the Grand Trunk Brigade. A force of between six and seven thousand men with cavalry and artillery was massed in Logan's Farm by 11 a.m., for a field day and review, on the termination of which the troops from Laprairie returned to camp the same day after marching an average distance of sixteen miles, and twice effecting the passage of the River St. Lawrence. The cavalry present at the camps were well mounted and formed a fine looking body of men. The field and garrison batteries of artillery were practised in artillery exercise and their skill in manoeuvring, and at shot and shell practice was favorably reported on.

Coupled with the above creditable record the fact that in a week's time an expedition was organized and despatched to Manitoba, and we have pretty substantial proof that the Department over which Sir George Cartier presides is a very long way from being Dunkinised. When men can be found who will rush in scores, where only tens are wanted, to join an expedition bound for a remote region, through a wild and inhospitable country, and with a rigorous winter at their heels, we need never despair of Canada's ability to take her own part when necessity requires. The perfection to which our military system has been brought, is attracting the attention of those who imagined that nothing good, in a military point of view, could come out of the colonies. Alarmed at the evident failure of Mr. Cardwell's army policy, as shown in the Berkshire campaign, the English press urges the Gladstone ministry to take a leaf out of our military book. Our cousins across the Lake, seldom eager to give credit where credit is due out of their own country, are also loud in their commendations of our campaigns of peace. We have shown the world that it is quite possible for a nation to have a competent host of citizen soldiers without resorting to the almost tyrannical measures of Germany. We expect that from the experience of this summer, our military authorities will be able to add to the efficiency which now exists. An improved hospital system, a more expeditious commissariat and a weeding out of those officers who either through press of civil business or laziness, do not attend closely to their own duties and to the interests of the men under their command, would, we think, make our Volunteer force as near perfection as military perfection goes."

At the close of the autumnal manoeuvres of the British army the VOLUNTEER REVIEW pointed out in what essential particulars that campaign of peace fell short of the actual experience of warfare, so far as imita-