

THE CANADIAN MILITIA GAZETTE

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The Militia Expenditures.

Once more the militia are entering upon their annual drill, determined cheerfully to make the best of the slim appropriation set apart for their training and maintenance, but noting with regret that another year has passed without improvement in this respect. It cannot be said, however, that the prospect has not brightened, for the most substantial grievance felt by the force is believed to have very nearly approached the vanishing point during the session of Parliament just concluded. A number of military members, aware of the futility of attempting to satisfactorily maintain corps only called together for drill every second year, enlisted the sympathies of many civilian representatives in the Commons, and so convincingly presented their case to the Government that at one time it was quite confidently expected an appropriation would be asked sufficient to drill the whole force this season. The Minister of Militia was known to be sparing no effort to secure such a concession for his department, and his colleagues seemed on the whole well affected towards the request. But the supplementary estimates appeared without including the expected extra amount of \$175,000; and the realization of the hopes raised was deferred for the time being. The reason has not been stated, but we believe the omission was not the result of any change of opinion as to the advisability of the proposed new departure, but rather on account of unexpected increase in necessary expenditure for other purposes. It is to be hoped, therefore, that out of the increased revenue anticipated the Government will be able to recommend a larger military appropriation whilst still adhering to the wise policy of keeping the ordinary expenses of government within the revenue. The balance sheet presented by the Finance Minister for a few years past, and his expectations as to the financial operations of the next two years, are certainly very encouraging, and warrant the hope that there will be no lack of funds available for this useful purpose. The enthusiasm of its members has kept the force up to a creditably high standard, and it is only just to expect that, in these days of general prosperity, there should be an increase in the military expenditure commensurate with the growth of population and larger revenue of the country. Instead of this the appropriations have remained stationary or have actually decreased so far as the militia in general are concerned, the permanent force taking of late so large a share of the money. The

schools established in connection with this force have been of immense benefit to the militia, but their advantage has been lessened by the fact that, in a great number of the rural corps especially, the officers have been so discouraged by the scanty support received from the Government that they have lost ambition to qualify at the schools. In such cases the promise of annual drills would be electrical; and the motive power thus furnished would send the provisional officers flocking to the schools in such numbers that those institutions could scarcely take them in.

It is too much the fashion, amongst even well informed people, to decry military expenditure as unnecessary, because of the improbability of our ever being called upon to do any fighting. Past experience in Canada has shown how imperative it is to have a willing force organized and equipped for service at a moment's notice; and no one can say how near or far removed may be the next occasion upon which the militia may be called upon to take the field: it is the unexpected that happens. If, however, there could be a certainty that their services would never be required, Canada would be more than repaid for the expenditure upon her militia by the advantage the training is to the young men of the country. The wholesome discipline to which the soldier has to submit is of incalculable benefit to him in after life; and even one season's drill effects such an improvement in the physique and general bearing as to produce a marked superiority in the physical appearance of the youth of any locality where military institutions flourish. Fired with enthusiasm by the parades of their older brothers, or perhaps their fathers, the school boys have of late taken up military drill to an extent which promises great results in the future, if sufficient encouragement is given to maintain life in the movement.

Since the members of the militia derive this personal advantage from their connection with the force, it may be urged that self interest should prompt them to give their services without further recompense. Those who so argue are probably not aware of the heavy cost to the members at which many corps are now maintained. In fact the financial sacrifices made by the militiamen are very little understood or appreciated; and we will take occasion shortly to present to the public some interesting particulars as to the excess of the cost of volunteer soldiering over the modest contribution of the public through the Government.

The Leaders of the League.

In giving space, as we have done, to letters from responsible correspondents pointing out how the Military Rifle League regulations might be improved, it has been with the hope that the letters might be taken in the friendly spirit in which we are sure they were written. We entirely agree with the contention that there should be a check upon the markers, supervision being more necessary at the butts than at the firing points. As the Secretary intimates in his letter in another place in this issue, if there is a combination to cheat no regulations can prevent it; there is, however, little danger of such combination, but what should be guarded against is dishonesty on the part of individual markers who might add points if left to themselves but would be