

Defences of Montreal.

Now that the Government has caused the manufacture and conversion of guns to be commenced at Montreal, it will not be out of place to point out the necessity there exists for the erection of batteries in suitable localities for the defence of that city. It has been said that our Militia has been augmented from time to time by additions to particular arms, more from the whim or fancy of the individual entrusted with its organization than for the suitability of the troop, battery, or company, for the locality in which it was raised. This cannot be said, however, of the brigade of artillery stationed at Montreal, it having been formed when General Sir Patrick Macdougall was Adjutant-General, for the purpose of manning the batteries proposed to be erected for that place, and there is not the slightest doubt as to its being an organization essentially necessary for the defence of Montreal. The brigade of artillery and the two companies of engineers stationed there, are monuments of the neglect of past Governments, as compared with the efforts of individuals, of that dire necessity—the necessity of being prepared in peace for time of war. Jomini says:—"Un Gouvernement qui néglige son armée, sous quelque prétexte, que ce soit, est donc un gouvernement coupable aux yeux de la postérité, puisqu'il prépare des humiliations à ses drapeaux et à son pays."

What better training could the Montreal Engineers have had these many years than that recommended for them by the Inspector of Artillery, their employment during annual drills in the erection of batteries, if only of earth, in positions where they are required? What better training also could the Artillery have had than the manning of these batteries, and instruction in the care and working of the ordnance mounted in them? It is the duty of every artilleryman to make himself acquainted with the distances to conspicuous objects in front of his batteries, in fact to be perfectly instructed in the topography of the country which, in time of war, he would be required to defend. We ask how is it possible for the Artillery of Montreal to educate themselves on this important point,—we say important, because the better a gunner is acquainted with the distance to every knoll, even to every tree in front of his works, the more destructive and effective will his fire be. The neglect of this work—the erection of batteries in front of Montreal, to which St. Helen's Island would be a central key—amounts to indifference as regards the future of the country; an indifference which, in a few years, may cost thousands of valuable lives. This non-preparation cost the French nation millions of francs. If this money had been spent in altering and adapting works, 200 years old, to the exigencies of the present time—in instructing their officers and non-commissioned officers in the topography of the country, etc., they would have had a different tale to tell. It is a well-known fact that the German officers knew much more about France—from the location of her depôts of stores to the smithy where a horse could be quickly shod—than the French did themselves. Every German officer was provided with a reliable map of the country he had to operate in. How many Canadian militia officers have maps of that part of Canada in which their services might be required—how many of them have been taught that such a thing is necessary? The military education of our Militia officers lies too much at the surface. We are afraid that if the Militia had to be divided into many divisions for the defence of different localities, the commanding Generals would have to be "heaven-sent."

There is only one battery near Montreal, a 3 gun battery on the end of St. Helen's Island, used for the annual practice of the Brigade, and this unique battery points in the opposite direction to that in which an enemy might be expected. Should it, however, happen to be attacked by the possibility mentioned in our last issue,—a gun boat with a single heavy gun on board—it would not remain serviceable for over 10 minutes.

There are many reasons why this city should be placed in a state of defence in addition to the fact that the manufacture

and conversion of guns, etc., has been commenced there. This was the only reason; nothing but a desire to reward Messrs. Gilbert for their energy in showing that the work could be done in the country, could, we imagine, influence anyone in having the work carried out in Montreal at its proximity to the frontier being sufficient to condemn the idea of establishing an arsenal there, on however small a scale.

General Hauley, in writing of the considerations for the selection of a theatre of operations, says:—"Many considerations will commonly enter into this question. The convenience and security of the base—the position of the enemy's forces—the facilities, in the shape of good and practicable roads, for reaching the object—the fitness of the topographical character of the theatre to the army destined to operate in it—will all be elements in the problem." We believe there is not a single consideration of those enumerated which would not be found in the neighborhood of Montreal, by an army attacking Canada from the United States. Being in close proximity to the frontier, a base of operations both secure and convenient, one might almost say, already prepared in that country. We allude to the arms manufacturing centres of Springfield and Albany. The facilities afforded for reaching Montreal could hardly be better arranged. What would be the consequence Montreal falling into an enemy's hands? Ottawa would be in his mercy. A very few hours would send the assembled wisdom of our Parliament, if in session, flying to their respective homes. Canada would be divided, the east from the west, and the whole of her foreign trade would be dead. It is unnecessary for us to point out where batteries erected for the defence of Montreal should be situated. The position where they are required have already been pointed out by able pens than ours many years since, without any action having been taken towards carrying out the recommendations then made. We hope for better times. The present Government has shown itself more fully alive to the interests of the Militia service than its predecessors, and it is to be hoped the good work so commenced will be continued.

Cavalry.

A volunteer cavalry organization has long existed in Quebec even as far back as the days of the old French régime, being the only cavalry then in Canada, some few parties connected with the Quebec squadron of that day may prove of interest to our readers.

Lemoine, in his "Quebec, Past and Present," tells us "The Quebec Volunteer Cavalry, numbering 200 men, was commanded by one of Montcalm's *aides-de-camp*, a cavalry officer, Capt. La Roche Beaucourt."

Miles' "History of Canada Under the French Régime" tells us, at page 370, that "Montcalm had a reserve of upward of two thousand colonial troops and Indians, and three hundred and fifty horsemen," whose duty seems to have been incessant under the vigorous enthusiasm of M. de Bougainville, like the ubiquitous Uhlans of modern times, this little band seem to have been everywhere, for we hear of them often "in the rear of Montcalm's centre, on the high ground, in case that the earliest intelligence might be received of the movements of the approaching enemy," and then of their being "detached from the main body at Beauport to watch the movements of the English on the river, above the city." Their headquarters were established at Cap Rouge, and they subsequently assisted materially in helping towards the repulse of two attempts at landing, which were made by Murray's "at Point-aux-Trembles," and several other little affairs at Chambault, Sillery and elsewhere. From Knox's "History of the Campaign in North America," written at the time and published in London, 1769, we learn most about the doings of this corps; and as he makes distinct mention of their