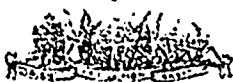


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The Volunteer Review,

AND

MILITARY AND NAVAL GAZETTE.

"If I should, unbought, our swords we draw,
To guard the Monarch, fence the Law."

OTTAWA, TUESDAY, MARCH 10, 1874.

For CORRESPONDENTS.—Letters addressed to either the Editor or Publisher, as well as communications intended for publication, must, invariably, be *pre-paid*. Correspondents will also bear in mind that one end of the envelope should be left open, and at the corner the words "Printer's copy" written and a two or five cent stamp (according to the weight of the communication) placed thereon will pay the postage.

In this issue we republish a letter addressed to the MINISTER OF MILITIA AND DEFENCE on "Militia Reorganization," by our gallant and talented correspondent *Centurion*, in which the whole of the problems surrounding our Military service are ably and intelligently discussed. As the writer can claim the advantage of great personal experience, and as he is a thoroughly qualified soldier holding high rank in the Volunteer service of Canada, his opinions are worthy serious consideration and should carry all the weight accorded to matured and well considered conviction at this crisis of our Military organization, when the demand for vital changes is heard on all sides. On the part of the political economist—in order to lessen nominally at least the burden of taxation by the theorist—in order that his inventive faculties may have a chance at devising something more

perfect, and by the fanatical opponents of all armaments as a means towards its final abolition.

Placing its full value on the *brochure*, which we submit to our readers, as the production of a thoroughly clever and talented officer, we are not at all satisfied that the plan proposed would be a good substitute for our present organization, or that it could be practically worked under our social system.

Centurion places the basis of a constitutional on an axiom and its consequent problem—the Military duty owed the State by every individual—and equal conditions of services to all; and a proposition—that those who would desire to be exempted from Military service for any cause should contribute a money payment towards defraying the expense of the armament kept on foot.

Now, while it is evident the axiom of Military service due by the individual admits of no question, its application involves many problems; for instance, in the population of the country there are many physically incapable, many naturally incapable, and many who are rendering the State service in other capacities from which they cannot be spared. Having made all due allowance for those, it will be found that the number capable of rendering Military service to the country will not amount to more than five per cent of the whole population, or about 200,000 men, and of that number there are over 20 per cent or about 43,500 men enrolled in the Volunteer ranks; it is also evident that there has been filtered through those ranks at least three times their number since their first organization, so that another period of service would in all probability leave us in possession of a partially trained force equal to all our available fighting population, so that the principle embodied in the axiom has been fully developed by the "Militia law." From the condition shown above it would be impossible to make "equal conditions of service." *Centurion* surely does not mean to draft the incapable, the coward, the merchant, or the mechanic whose services even in warfare are far more valuable than they would be shouldering a rifle at the front, and as it is from their labour any Military force is, and must be maintained, it is hard to conceive what good could be effected by resorting to direct personal taxation to support one institution whose sole duty is to protect the State, and should in turn be maintained by it. Moreover, as the burden of taxation is unequal—that is the whole taxes of the country are paid by the Agricultural class—it is hard to conceive how they should be called upon to send *three-fourths* of the whole force to the field and tax themselves not only for its support, but for the short coming (as assumed) of all the rest of the population. In following out this problem of Military service to its logical conclusion, it will be found that the present "Militia law" has provided for every possible contingency but one, and that is the real

cause of all the trouble in the ranks of the Volunteer force. It is *Centurion's* fourth reason why the force is ineffective, and may be stated as he puts it—"Because the pay allowed to the men of the existing force is inadequate for a voluntary service"—and we fail to see how a levy *en masse* would better the condition. Men must live—and in order to do so must labour or have others labour for them. The soldier individually or *en masse* is in the latter condition; he is simply a consumer and must have others to labour for him; in other words, he must have *pay*. If it is equal to what he could earn in civil life the ranks will be kept always full. If not, there is no reason to believe he is a greater fool than his neighbours. A due consideration of this phase of political economy will satisfy any impartial critic that while the theory of the duty to the State is correct, the problems connected therewith are not easily solved.

We must then assume that the application of the draft is impracticable under ordinary conditions, and as it involves the whole of *Centurion's* theory, it follows that while his scheme founded thereon is very comprehensive & well as simple, it would be entirely inapplicable to our present circumstances which requires just such a system as the "Militia law" has developed—that every division of the Military force of the country should be complete in itself, because the force raised being purely for defensive purposes it was a necessity of the case whatever point was assailed its local Militia should be able to maintain its defence till succoured.

While heartily endorsing many of *Centurion's* views, we are compelled to differ from the principles he lays down. The "Militia Bill" is a law of development and requires time to mature its excellencies as well as exhibit its very few defects. Wholesale reorganization would for ever prevent the growth of anything like stability as connected with our Military institutions; and those are of such a vital interest to the State as to preclude the possibility of tampering with them in any way. *Centurion* has, however, added another valuable page to our Military literature.

An article on Explosives from the *Brass Arrow* of 24 January, which appears in another page, refers to the following experiments made with *dynamite*, as a munition of war in Austria.

It is evident that the recently discovered explosive agents are not destined to supersede gunpowder in artillery or small arms but their value in siege operations, and as submarine mines is self evident.

It is known that one of the characteristics of gun cotton which contributes to its applicability to military purposes is that it may be freely brought under fire without fear of accidental explosion—that is to say a package of compressed gun cotton would not explode if struck by a rifle bullet. If the gun cotton were dry, the heat caused by the impact of the bullet would set it on