

### The Canadian Militia.

At a time when general attention is turned towards military subjects, and to the means which, in the event of hostilities would be available for the protection of the Empire, a Report on the condition of the forces of our most powerful colony cannot fail to excite interest. Since the withdrawal of the Imperial troops, the burden of providing for her defence has fallen entirely on Canada; and, being both unwilling and unable to maintain a standing army, her Government has devoted the small amount of money at its disposal to the organization of a Militia. This force has been under the command of an Imperial officer—Major General Smyth—who, having made a tour of inspection over a distance of eleven thousand miles, of which two thousand were performed on horse back, submits his Report to the Dominion Parliament.

To many readers the most interesting part of this Report will be that which deals with the vast territory lying between the Province of Manitoba and the Rocky Mountains, and drained by the Saskatchewan and its tributaries. This country, described by Captain Butler as the Great Lone Land, appears to be awaiting the settlers who, when means of communication have been rendered more complete, will probably make it their home. In the meantime the Indian tribes continue to hunt over those parts which the buffalo has not deserted, and claim the protection of the Government against the adventurers who, as whisky traders, threaten them with demoralization and destruction. To make the arm of the law felt in those distant territories, a force of three hundred mounted constabulary was recently organized, and Gen. Smyth was directed to report on their efficiency and on the effect produced by their presence. His Report, we are glad to say, is eminently satisfactory; the illicit trade in spirituous liquors, with its attendant evils, has been stopped; and the Blackfoot Indians—the most warlike of the Canadian tribes—have been first to acknowledge the benefits they derive from the withdrawal of the temptations which, whilst unable to resist, they clearly recognize as the precursor of ruin and of death. Their chiefs held a conference with General Smyth at the foot of the Rocky Mountains, and after expressing their satisfaction at the security afforded them by the presence of the mounted police, requested him to represent to the Government their wishes for the conclusion of treaties for the allotment of land similar to those accorded to the Eastern Prairie Indians.

So far all promises well, and the friendly spirit in which the officers of the United States army across the border met General Smyth, and their evident desire to promote arrangements conducive to good order on the frontiers, afford an additional hope for the preservation of peace throughout the hitherto lawless regions of the Far West. It would be a curious subject for speculation to prognosticate the components of the future population of these regions. Icelanders, and Mennonites from Southern Russia, are already cultivating farms in Manitoba; French Canadians, halfbreeds, and Scotch servants of the Hudson Bay Company congregate round the old trading posts; whilst at Kootenay Pass, in the Rocky Mountains, a Chinese settlement claims protection from the Canadian authorities. The presence of the police and of their horses necessitates the cultivation of cereals, and especially of oats round their several barracks, and will lead to trade which will gradually people the wilderness, whose soil, climate, and mineral productions appear to invite the settler. Sur-

veys have already been made, and the frontier has been marked out, although the buffalo by knocking down the pillars carefully placed by the engineers will, unless checked, do much to destroy the fruits of their labour.

A ride across country from Manitoba to British Columbia was, however, only an incident in General Smyth's tour of inspection. The gist of the Report deals with the present condition of the militia force on which Canada relies for protection against foreign foes, and for the maintenance of good order within her extended territory. This force is called out annually for twelve days' drill, and the numbers so trained amounted during the last year to nearly twenty nine thousand, half of which were furnished by Ontario. The General speaks highly of the intelligence, the physical qualities, and the aptitude for military duties of both officers and men, although he points out the almost impossibility of attaining a sufficiently high standard of efficiency, or even of preserving from damage and destruction the arms, accoutrements, and clothing of the force, without some permanent and educated regimental staff. He had previously recommended a paid adjutant for each battalion; but as this proposition did not find favour with those who control the national purse, he has reduced his request to a sergeant major, who would also act as storekeeper. He also advocates training schools for cavalry and infantry, as well as increased inducements for officers to pass through the shorter courses at the Artillery Schools at Quebec and Kingston. The Military College at the latter place is still in embryo, the Superintendent, Lieut. Colonel Hewitt, being the only officer who has actually received his appointment. It is to begin on a very modest scale, only twenty-two cadets being admitted in the first year. A great part of the fortifications at Quebec is reported to be falling into disrepair, and the absence of any guns of calibre sufficient to stop an ironclad is commented upon as a marked deficiency in the armament of a fortress which is supposed to command the entrance to the water-way of Canada. The warlike stores are indeed small in quantity; even of Snider ammunition there are not 140 rounds apiece for 50 000 men in the reserve magazines, although not a cartridge can be manufactured on that side of the Atlantic. In fact, the military resources of Canada are at a low ebb. The money voted for purposes of defence is small in amount, and in some respects commensurate value is not obtained from its expenditure. Throughout the Dominion, especially in Ontario, the military spirit exists, the annual training is popular, the men are of good stamp, and the officers avail themselves of the scanty means of instruction which their yearly drill affords; but it is useless to conceal the fact that the efficiency of the Militia is not built on solid foundations. The lessons taught in the barracks of the regular regiments formerly stationed throughout the country are still partially remembered, and a traditional standard of the efficiency to which the Militia should strive to reach is maintained; but, as years pass by, these recollections become more and more dim, and gradually, but not the less surely, will the military organization deteriorate.

For this result Canada is not so much to be blamed as the Mother Country. For many years dependent on the presence of a large force of Imperial troops, Canada did little for her own protection. Roused by the great American Civil War, and by the troubles on her frontier, of which it was partially the cause, a numerous militia was

formed on paper, and during the Fenian disturbances a considerable force was called out, drilled, and disciplined. Training schools were established at the headquarters of the various regular regiments, and the service of able officers were secured to organize and command the several camps of instruction. The reports of the aptitude of the Canadian militia for military work were very encouraging, and it appeared probable that in a short time a vigorous system of professional training would have been instituted. Suddenly the policy changed. The troops were withdrawn without any provision having been made for a continuance of the education they were affording; fortresses which had just been built at great cost were handed over unharmed to a Government which could not even afford to keep them from falling into disrepair, and stores which in many instances were old and obsolete were sold, at no mean price and after haggling, to departments which, even if the articles had been serviceable, did not know how to use or preserve them. The military schools fell into decay and consequent disrepair; outside Halifax there was not a company, a squadron, or a battery which could furnish a pattern to the militia, and Canada was left, unaided by the Mother Country, to provide for her own means of defence. Considerable soreness was felt throughout the country at the manner in which the withdrawal of the troops had been effected; a period of apathy was the result, and the military organization threatened to collapse. However, the instincts of a nation proud of its connexion with England, and resolved to maintain its position, prevented so great a misfortune. Efforts were made to provide schools of gunnery, at which officers of all branches of the service might be trained, and these schools formed small but not inefficient garrisons for the two fortresses of Quebec and Kingston. The annual training of the militia in camps of instruction was continued and the services of a few imperial officers obtained. Recently the Government has decided on the formation of a military college at Kingston, with the object of training cadets as officers, and has asked to be supplied with three or four officers of the regular army to act as instructors. The request does not appear unreasonable; but hitherto the numerous difficulties which official routine has (perhaps unavoidably) thrown in the way of its fulfilment have delayed their appointment. In fact, England does not recognize the importance of fostering the military spirit of her colonies. Much might be done with little or no expenditure of money. One infantry regiment stationed in Canada, one squadron of cavalry, and one battery of artillery, involving no additional charge on the army estimates, would go far towards raising the standard of the militia. Whilst of many staff officers who, having been trained at Sandhurst, are without employment, a few might be spared to assist in the instruction of the young men who are willing and ready to be educated on English models. If England were involved in a great European struggle, Canada would readily send assistance; and a well organized force, such as she could with little difficulty equip, would be no mean addition to our army, and would well repay the very slight cost which in peace time our Treasury might be called on to pay. A really broad view of the organization of the Imperial army should comprehend not merely the forces of England and of India, but those of the great colonies, which, instead of being a weakness, ought to be a source of military strength to the Mother Country. Times have changed since—only a few years past—it is the fashion among