

muster. The same course has been pursued during the present year. I have attended some of these musters, and have witnessed with surprise the aptitude of those assembled at learning the more elementary formations, and the regularity and ease with which, when under the command of an efficient officer, the different Companies of the Battalion marched, formed square, &c. &c.

15. It is true that all the Law requires of the Militia is this one day's muster, (though it should be borne in mind that, failing the Volunteers, a thousand men are liable to be drawn by ballot for more lengthened drill,) but it must be remembered that the law applies to the whole male population under 60 years of age, and that to call the whole male population together for any long period, the rich merchant from his counting house—the needy settler from his half cleared farm—the lumberer from the woods—the ploughman from the field—the boatman from the river,—would be as oppressive as it is in fact impracticable. As it is, the pecuniary sacrifice entailed by one day's muster is great. But though the law requires no more, a good deal is being done.

The new Colonels whom I have appointed, and those who are efficient among the older ones, require their officers to learn their Drill, and to uniform themselves. For the purpose of instruction I have issued, on application, Rifles to the Officers commanding Battalions, on Bonds similar to those given by the Captains of Volunteer Companies; and the nearest Drill Instructor of Volunteers teaches their use, and drills the Officers on those days when his services are not elsewhere required. To these meetings of Officers I am happy to say the Non-Commissioned Officers of the Militia Battalions in many instances now resort; and if the Officers and Non-Commissioned Officers of the Militia become a trained and instructed body, far more good will be attained than by assembling a large and untrained body of men once a year for two or three days. Some of the Lieutenant Colonels encourage their Officers to add Target Practice to their Drill; and I have witnessed the Officers of one Battalion, neatly uniformed in scarlet shell jackets, paraded to fire, and shooting quite as well as the practised shots of an average Volunteer Company. I am convinced that as regards organization, such a beginning has been now made as requires only care and watchfulness to develope itself, without the need of direct action on the part of the Government. Money, however, no doubt is greatly wanting, and I trust this want will next year be in some degree supplied.

16. I perceive from your Despatch that you labor under a mistaken impression in supposing that the sum annually allotted to the Militia is fixed in the Militia Law. It is annually voted by the Legislature, and may be indefinitely diminished or increased. The Grant is always opposed, and opposed with energy; and though the Government have always maintained the vote at the amount first fixed, a considerable minority of the Assembly have always called for its reduction. I was, however, last year informed by the leading Members of my Executive Council, that if I were successful in shewing an improvement in the Militia, and an apparent desire on the part of the people at large to develope the system, that a vote of at least double the amount should be proposed for 1865, and I have no reason to suppose that this pledge will be evaded.

17. It is my intention to propose to my advisers before the next meeting of the Provincial Parliament a scheme, the details of which I hope shortly to lay before you, and which will have for its object the training of a certain portion of the Militia for several consecutive days in each year.

18. When I have the honor of forwarding this scheme for your consideration, I shall accompany it by a few remarks on the question of the defence of the British North American Provinces generally. It is no doubt true that much more than is done with this object might be done by the Provinces themselves,—but on the other hand I feel constrained to admit that the language held by an influential portion of the English Newspaper Press on this subject appears to me unreasonable and over-strained. Self-defence is no doubt a duty, but there must, in the first place, be something to defend; and though I am aware that high authorities consider that Military defence should always form the chief item in the expenditure of a country or a Province, yet it must be remembered that the very maintenance of self-existence imperatively requires the outlay of the greater part of the Provincial Revenue on objects and institutions which, in an older country, have been already established, or are maintained by private enterprize.

I have, &c.

(Signed)

ARTHUR H. GORDON.