

the force, that is to say the G. O. commanding. Of course that is a matter of opinion. Wherever and whenever we feel criticism necessary we shall fearlessly express it, but we shall also always endeavor to be just and fair. Our correspondent says:—"For my part I think the responsibility lies not with the minister, who is only too willing to do whatever is in his power for the furtherance of the work of the service, but rather with the chief executive officer of the militia. I notice that you sing his praises at times. He may be praiseworthy at times; but his chief idea seems to be to snub every one who has any suggestions to offer for the benefit of the militia. On the other hand anything connected with the permanent force has his immediate attention. So long as they import people to attempt work they do not understand just so long will they have the force eternally kicking. Who recommended the Martini-Metford any way? Was it the minister?"

An answer to this last question goes a long way towards answering our correspondent's letter. General Herbert doubtlessly recommended the Martini-Metford. He admitted it himself; but the Minister was not obliged to take his advice off hand. We do not know yet whether the recommendation was a good one or not, but however it may turn out, it was a most injudicious act for the minister to sanction any outlay of public money on this weapon until he had had the opinion of a thoroughly qualified small arms committee upon it. The political head of the Militia department is responsible to the public for the administration of the department, and he must expect to be more often within the range of public criticism than the military head of the force, who is not directly responsible to the public. The latter officer is practically above public criticism, which runs off his shoulders as easily as water off a duck's back. It is through the political chief of the department, too, that the force must look for an amelioration of the present deplorable conditions. Criticism is likely to produce something when levelled at the Minister of Militia, for criticism has some weight with him, for he and the government of

which he is a member have to go on public trial at every election. And we criticise for results and not the mere fun of the thing.

It is news to us, by the by, to learn that we are at times given to singing General Herbert's praises. We have often acknowledged his energy and independence, and frankly admitted the good work he has done in shaking up some of the old bones in the force. Although he has worked hard since he assumed the command, however, it must be admitted that he has not accomplished as much as might reasonably have been expected had he understood the militia better or been better understood by them. Much that has been considered arbitrary and unreasonable in his conduct has really been due to his earnestness and intensity of purpose. We shall appreciate this some day, but meantime the popular idea of the general's disposition and motives have had a distinctly bad effect upon the militia. But it would be absurd to attempt to place the whole blame for the present state of the militia upon the shoulders of the General or his predecessors. What is chiefly to blame is the faulty administration of the Militia department. We do not blame the present minister personally, but as he is the political head of the department he has to shoulder his share of the responsibility.

There can be no doubt that a good deal of the systematic neglect of militia matters at Ottawa is due to members of the force themselves. If militiamen would actively interest themselves in militia affairs and approach the members of the government with definite proposals and feasible plans of improvement they would be listened to, and their advice often accepted. They should also enlist the support of their local members in the interests of the militia. According to all appearances the general elections are near at hand, and militiamen should see to it that they and their friends support no candidates but such as are sound on the question of militia reform. If they do this we shall soon cease to be worried trying to decide whether the general commanding or the political head of the department is most to blame

for the insufficiency of the force, for that condition will speedily give way to efficiency.

An agitation is being carried on in the press of British Columbia for representation of that province in the Dominion Cabinet, which is held to be an absolute necessity if the questions particularly affecting that vast country are to be intelligently dealt with. The fact that one of the foremost members of Parliament from British Columbia is a prominent officer of the militia, leads naturally to the suggestion that should he be called upon to enter the ministry, the military department should be placed in his charge. Lieut.-Col. Prior, M. P., is the type of man who makes friends on all occasions without sacrificing principle or allowing the desire to please to interfere with the performance of duty. He is essentially a man of affairs, being the active head of an extensive mercantile business and the officer commanding a battalion having the largest authorized strength of any in the Dominion and second to none in general efficiency, as shown by the official records. He is the president of the Dominion Artillery Association, and a few years ago was chosen to command the Canadian team for Wimbledon. In every sense Col. Prior is a representative officer, thoroughly progressive and practical in his ideas. Under the sympathetic administration of a man of his type the militia department would in all probability soon cease to be distinguished by the masterly inactivity which has become its confirmed characteristic. No doubt the present minister has tried to do all that fairly could be expected of a man without military qualifications; but should he retire, as he seems inclined to do, the department ought to be put in the hands of some one in touch and sympathy with the militia.

Why is it that though the Sergeant Major, of the Halifax Garrison artillery is shown in the establishment list, 94-95, as belonging to the permanent staff of the Active Militia, his appointment has not appeared in the orders? Has the appointment not been made, or is it not to be made at all? If it is not, why does the establishment list stand as it is? The Montreal and British Columbia appointments were made. What is the difference in the case of the Halifax Battalion? This simply appears to be one of those nonsensical delays which are inexcusable and do the militia force so much harm.