

think that it would be difficult to make the period so long, but I think that three weeks altogether, from the time the men leave, would give a period that would very much improve the capabilities of the soldiers.

The general speaks equally high of the city corps but recommends that they should be compelled every year to assemble in camp so as to enable them to get a knowledge of camp life—to learn how to shoot, to learn field practice and other things. Now comes a recommendation, which I consider most important, and which shows how thoroughly the general has, in a most common sense way reviewed the whole situation. We all know that the number of active militia we have would amount to very little, even if mustered in full force, should we get into war, and he therefore takes up the question of reserves and divides that into two branches. I am going to trouble the House with reading his whole proposition, which shows that the cost of having reserves to fill the ranks or enlarge the force would not amount to anything very considerable. He writes as follows:—

(21.) In the existing organization of the military forces of the Dominion two defects are very conspicuous; they are:

(1.) That with the exception of the more recently raised units, viz., Field Companies of Engineers, Companies of the Army Service Corps and the Field Hospitals and Bearer Companies, there are no war establishments prescribed for the fighting troops.

(2.) That even were such establishments prescribed, no practical machinery exists for raising regiments, batteries and battalions from a peace to a war footing.

The first of these is a comparatively simple matter to be dealt with by regulations which I purpose to submit, but the second is a very much more important question, demanding most serious consideration and possibly special legislation. The units of the active militia as they now stand in the establishment lists cannot be taken seriously in any scheme for the defence of Canadian territory. Our regiments of eight companies number 306 rank and file, equivalent on a war footing to a little over two companies, and when we come down to the so-called 'regiments' of four companies they practically only amount to one company for fighting purposes; thus our existing system only provides us with the nuclei of armed forces that must be capable of expansion to render them efficient units in war. The problem to be faced is how to devise a practical scheme for rapidly raising our units to whatever may be prescribed as their war strength, with the least possible disturbance of existing conditions, but one thing is very clear that sooner or later it has to be done, if our militia is to be regarded as a truly efficient defence for Canadian soil.

It would not be possible here to enter into all the details that would require to be provided for in the organization of reserves for the active militia, but the following is a brief statement of the lines upon which I believe it would be practicable to proceed under the powers conferred by the Militia Act.

(a.) That for every squadron, battery or company of the active militia there be raised from

the first and second classes of the male population (sec. II) by ballot (sec. 12, (c.)) an affiliated unit of 50 men.

(b.) That in time of peace such unit need not be called out for training, but each man must be a duly registered member of a Civilian Rifle Club and must produce, when called upon, a certificate that he has fired his annual allowance of ammunition, under some penalty to be legally prescribed.

(c.) That the captain of the active unit shall be 'ipso facto' the commanding officer of the reserve unit.

(d.) That every man enrolled in a reserve unit shall present himself at company headquarters to be mustered once a year on a date to be specified by the D.O.C.

(e.) That reasonable travelling allowances for attending muster should be granted to any reservist residing beyond six miles from company headquarters.

(f.) That non-commissioned officers and men who have served three years or upwards in the active militia be encouraged to voluntarily join the reserve of their own unit, receiving a small gratuity according to their rank on presenting themselves for annual muster.

The foregoing remarks apply more especially to rural corps which are organized on the squadron or company basis, but a similar system would, with perhaps some modification, apply to urban units which are organized regimentally. The question of reserves, so far as personnel is concerned, presents no real difficulty, for the men are there and can be converted into fairly efficient troops in a few weeks. But it is quite a different matter when we come to deal with material. Guns, rifles, saddlery, harness, equipment, clothing, tents and ammunition for the war establishments, &c., cannot be improvised at short notice, and I venture to urge that this is a matter of natural importance deserving of the most serious and careful consideration. No people are free from the sacred obligation to defend their own land from foreign aggression, and I contend that this can only be effectually and economically done by a business-like and gradual preparation in time of peace.

The expenditure on defence should be looked upon as the annual premium on a policy of national insurance, and as money well laid out in securing the independence and prosperity that can only be assured by 'the strong man armed.'

I think that that is a magnificent suggestion, simply and well put. The only objection I see to it is the ballot, but under the circumstances and for the purpose of having a unit of that sort, I am quite prepared to adopt the general's proposition. But I wish to draw this distinction. I do not want the ballot applied to the formation of companies and regiments, and to increase those for the purposes of drill, because that would add largely to our expenditure. But the suggestion is simple and effective. There shall be raised an affiliated unit of 50 men for every squadron, battery or company of the active militia. That would give a large increase at a very limited expense. The time taken is only what would be required for these men to go to headquarters once a year on a day to be mentioned and there present their certificates of the shooting accomplished, and if the men live more