

We have no patience with those who use the utter failure of the present system of pretending to drill the rural militia as an argument in favour of the disbandment of the rural corps altogether. It is not the officers and men of the rural force who are the blame. It is the system. The very pick of the manhood of Canada lives in the country and better material for soldiers does not exist anywhere. Besides possessing an unrivalled physique, the young Canadian countryman has great natural intelligence, has had his intellect trained by a sound elementary education, is amenable to discipline, respectable, courageous and intensely loyal. Time and money devoted to giving him a military training are well spent, if spent judiciously, which they certainly are not at present. A national militia without the rural corps would be like Hamlet with the melancholy Danish prince left out.

We would like to see the question of the training of the rural militia seriously taken up by the Minister, for as the honorable gentleman's colleagues in the cabinet appear to be keeping the purse strings pretty closely drawn when he is around, economy must be a great object in the administration of his department, and with the present system the department and the country do not get value for their money.

The suggestion which appears to meet with most general approval among the members of the force is that some system of drill at company headquarters should be arranged in place of these summer camps. There is much to be said in favour of such an arrangement. In the first place the time of the present camps is so short that there can be no pretence of doing effective work in battalion drill, and as a matter of fact the time is too short to give even a smattering of squad, arm and company drill. There is no need to assemble battalions for this work.

Young men in small country towns and villages find it even harder to get away from their businesses than city young men would, and they are absolutely unable to accompany their country battalions

to the present camps, and so they are lost to the militia. Drills at company headquarters could be arranged so that they would not clash with business, as is done in the city corps. We do not think that the objection that young farmers are too tired after their day's work to attend drill amounts to much, for it is a question if their day's work is more fatiguing than that of the city mechanic. And see how he turns up for drill. Young countrymen are not too tired at nights, particularly in the winter, to attend dancing assemblies, and singing classes, besides frequently gathering to exchange gossip at the village grocery. Why should they be too tired to attend drill, which should be just as attractive a recreation to them as to their cousins in the big cities?

Some who pretend to know, and who certainly do know something about the delightful political methods of this country, say that the brigade camps cannot be abolished on account of the patronage they give to the government and to the local members of parliament. But if the government spends a large proportion of its camp money as political largesse, the militia should not be charged with it. And we all know that a very large proportion of the amount annually voted by parliament for the maintenance of the militia finds its way into the ever open hands of greedy government contractors. By a substitution of drills at company headquarters for brigade camps there would be less scope for the mercenary contractor to get his greedy paw on the militia funds, and more of the money would find its way to the pockets of the party for whom it is intended, the Canadian Tommy Atkins.

Were the brigade camp expenses, other than the men's pay, done away with, the men could be allowed at the rate of twenty days pay, without even increasing the militia vote, which of course should be done; the force would get all of the good men it wanted, and they would have a sufficient knowledge of discipline and drill to make them a fairly serviceable body of militia, which they cannot be considered to be at present, even by the most violent stretch of the imagination.

As to the question of instruction there should be no difficulty. In the first place it is becoming more and more recognized in our service that drill instruction is a profession. We have many splendid officers and good drills at that in our force, but a capable militia officer has something else to do besides making a drill instructor of himself. Where time is limited experience on the part of the instructor is all the more necessary, and realizing this the officers of the crack city corps go down into their pockets for money to pay professional drill instructors. For instructional purposes three or four battalions could be linked together and an experienced instructor detailed under proper supervision to conduct all the drills, and also to hold instruction classes for the officers and non-commissioned officers. As a matter of fact it is urged by some that a regimental system of linked battalions for administrative as well as drill purposes would be a great advantage, and probably it would.

A sphinx-like silence prevails with regard to the command of the militia. The minister when last heard from in the House on the subject said that he did not know where General Herbert was or what his intentions were. The English service papers announce that the general intends to retire at the end of his term, and the *Board Review* adds what is regrettably true, that the Canadian command is not by any means a bed of roses.

There is not the least doubt but that the last three general officers commanding the militia had good reason to complain of the treatment they received in Canada, but General Herbert had much less reason to feel aggrieved than either the late General Luard or Sir Fred Middleton, both of which distinguished officers were simply disgracefully treated in this country. While it is gratifying to the members of our force to know that they have not been in the least to blame, the generals themselves always having given them the credit for a loyal and devoted co-operation, it cannot be overlooked that the appointment has got to be unpopular in the army, and it will be hard to get such an experienced general to succeed General Herbert as the