

THE VOLUNTEER REVIEW

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TO CORRESPONDENTS.

All Communications regarding the Militia or Volunteer movement, or for the Editorial department, should be addressed to the Editor of THE VOLUNTEER REVIEW, Ottawa.

Communications intended for insertion should be written on one side of the paper only.

We cannot undertake to return rejected communications. Correspondents must invariably send us, confidentially, their name and address.

All letters must be Post-paid, or they will not be taken out of the Post Office.

Adjutants and Officers of Corps throughout the Provinces are particularly requested to favor us regularly with weekly information concerning the movements and doings of their respective Corps, including the fixtures for drill, marching out, rifle practice, &c.

We shall feel obliged to such to forward all information of this kind as early as possible, so that it may reach us in time for publication.



The Volunteer Review, AND MILITARY AND NAVAL GAZETTE.

"Unbribed, unbought, our swords we draw,
To guard the Monarch, fence the law."

OTTAWA, MONDAY, JUNE 10, 1867

MR. MCGEE ON OUR DEFENCES.

If the letter of Mr. McGill, to his constituents in Montreal is, in any way, indicative of the policy of the Government in regard to our military affairs, and we feel safe in saying that it is, it will afford no small gratification to the Volunteer force, as it clearly indicates our intention of distributing the burden of militia duty over the whole country, and obliging every man to do his share of the necessary work instead of leaving it to be borne, as it now is, by a self-sacrificing few, who have been, in every way, but poorly paid for the losses incurred and endurance manifested in the discharge of their duties. All honor is due, and by the loyal portion of our people—conceded to the gallant ones without reward of any kind beyond the approval of their consciences, have efficiently maintained a force to whose existence the present tranquil state of the country is mainly due, but it would be injustice of the grossest kind, to ask the few to continue to provide all the many—who set at home at ease. The thanks of the Volunteers of Canada are due to Mr. McGEE for boldly stating what organization he considered requisite for the safety of the country—a measure demanded both by justice and the political exigencies of the times. With those portions of the honorable gentleman's letter which relate to civil matters, we have nothing to do, but the

following section in which he refers to our military organization merits the attention and thanks of every Volunteer in the country. The Hon. Mr. McGEE writes respecting the matter as follows:—"H. Gentlemen, "there is under God, one means by which "the necessary securities can be taken from "time for the realization of these possibilities; it is the 'armament of our whole "people.' We are but sharing the common "but of all civilized communities in awaking to the stern fact that in this age every "State must have, or be in a position to "have, if needed, the military service of "every son. The last great revolution which "marked the art of war,—the discovery of "gunpowder,—resulted in standing armies, "in the creation in every State of a class of "soldiers by trade or by profession. The "new revolution ushered in by the invention of so many new repeating weapons— "of so many hitherto unknown means of "aggression, afloat and ashore—the systematic application of modern machinery to "war—proclaims unmistakably to every people who would be free and secure on their "own soil,—Keep step with the times: arm "your entire population: arm them the best "weapons: arm them at the earliest moment: no country is safe from insult or "aggression in which every man does not "feel called up to bear arms in her defence." This is the voice of the present, "and it will be prolonged into the future. "I respect and honor our volunteers for "their noble self-sacrifice in the past: "against mere marauders they are quite "sufficient: but the days for mere volunteering are nearly, if not quite, over and "gone." There are few among our representatives would have thus fearlessly stated the requirements of the day: for the advocate of useful military organization, though he may counsel strict economy, must, if he be in earnest, be prepared to countenance heavy expenditure to bring about the desired end: and we have often felt sorry to see that, though they know how deep an interest is felt by the public on that point, many candidates for legislative honors omit making mention of it at all, or speak in such vague terms as cannot possibly give satisfaction to the present force. In saying that the days of mere volunteering are fast passing away, Mr. McGEE has only stated what every Volunteer knew to be the case, for any man who has served in the force for any period and knows the drawbacks against which its members have to contend—is aware that compulsory service must be resorted to, to supplement its strength in time of actual warfare. Some of our contemporaries have twisted this declaration of his into an advocacy of a standing army for the colonies, a construction so greatly at variance with its obvious meaning that we wonder they had the mendacity to put it forward. If the days of mere volunteering are almost done, so are days of standing armies, and no man of ordinary intelligence could be

supposed to uphold a system which to every appearance the great powers of the world are about to cut away as unfitted for the present age. The Hamilton 'Times' thus ably disposes of the charge "against Mr. McGEE,—a charge without the slightest foundation and calculated to do more harm to its originator than to him against whom it was directed. "We fail to discover that Mr. McGEE utters a single syllable in favor of a standing army, in the common acceptance of the term. If a thoroughly armed, well-drilled, and completely equipped militia force constitutes a standing army, then, of course, Mr. McGEE does advocate a standing army; and in that sense we have warmly advocated the same thing ever since the Trent affair occurred, and, indeed, before that event. If the people of Canada were Quakers, if they were non-resistants and non-combatants—if they conscientiously believed it to be a crime against God to defend their hearths and homes, and their country against those who would desecrate one and despoil them of the other, then they would be perfectly justified in neglecting, and not only in neglecting but in abstaining from all preparations for the defence of the country—from all military organization of any kind whatever. If Canadians are anxious to become slaves; if they are willing to be annexed to the United States without striking a single blow for their independence—for the preservation of their national autonomy; if they are supinely indifferent to all that men usually value most—if they are disposed to submit to be plundered by any band of marauding villains that may cross the lines from the United States, and make no effort to punish the robbers, then it would be an act of folly to provide either a standing army or a volunteer force, to enact a militia law, or even to establish a police force. The records of the past, however, establish the fact that Canadians will fight, when resistance to an invading force is demanded, and fight, too, with desperate and heroic valor. No man in Canada entertains a doubt as to the necessity of preparation for self defence. But how is this to be done? Not by keeping up a standing army, for that we cannot afford. The people are too poor and too few in numbers to keep up a standing army of a hundred thousand or even fifty thousand men. They cannot maintain a regular army sufficiently strong to defend the country against even the Fenian hordes of the neighboring Republic, should they attempt the conquest of the Dominion. What must then be done? Depend wholly upon our volunteer force? There are not probably more than thirty thousand volunteers in the whole country at the present time, although the law provides for thirty-five thousand in Upper and Lower Canada alone, without reference to the other Provinces; but then it must be borne in mind that very few of the Volunteer companies have a full complement of men. Besides, for any purpose beyond that