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Military Gazette

Successor to the Canadian Militia Gazette.

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Notes and Comments

A thrill of proper pride, very natural, considering the unswerving loyalty to the empire of the Canadian militia must have passed through all ranks of the force when the cable announced the other day that at the very first appearance of a suspicion of trouble on the European international political situation the Dominion government, through its representative in London had tendered a force of Canadian troops to the home government. We have always maintained that Canada as well as the other self-governing colonies of the empire should recognise in some tangible form a fair share of responsibility in connection with the matter of Imperial defence. As our

government has not yet arranged a basis upon which Canada can bind herself to do her fair share in assisting to maintain the defensive forces of the empire, the offer of the Dominion government the other day to furnish and maintain a force in the event of war, comes very opportunely as showing that our government recognizes, as does the militia, Canada's responsibility in this important matter.

But in the name of all that is political, martial or sensible at Ottawa, why was this offer of force restricted to the Royal Regiment of Canadian Infantry? Did the powers that be suppose that the "regular" redcoats could be the easiest spared from the country? Did they consider the gallant regiment, the best available fighting force at hand, or had they any fell designs on the lives of such of the officers of the corps as received their commissions through political preference and do not know enough of military science to take reasonable care of themselves on a campaign? We have General Herbert's own word for it that the artillery service is much superior to the infantry, and as the Royal Regiment of Canadian Artillery was not included in the offer it is scarcely reasonable to suppose that it was mere excellence alone which restricted the offer to the regular infantry regiment.

As to the availability of the Royal Regiment there can be no disputing the statement that in the event of hostilities this corps should be the very last one to be taken from the duties it is at present supposed to perform, that of imparting instruction to the active militia.

The whole excuse for the establishment and maintenance at great expense of the four companies which have been incorporated into this regiment was, and is, to provide schools of instruction for the active militia. In the event of war, even of invasion, it would be a great mistake to remove these companies from their instructional duties, for each military district would lie then more in need of its nucleus of military knowledge than ever and of its school for training officers and non-commissioned officers.

There has been gradually developing among certain officers of the permanent force, particularly in the infantry, an idea that the school feature of our Canadian barracks is derogatory to their dignity and positions as officers and gentlemen, objecting alike to their institutions being called "schools" and to the men of the permanent corps being used for the very instructional parades which they are paid to provide for the attached officers and non-commissioned officers. "We are not common schoolmasters," they say, "nor are our men mere blocks for a military kindergarten," and this in spite of the fact that these corps are maintained wholly for educational purposes. Of course there are notable exceptions, officers who esteem it their highest privilege to be able to assist in their military studies the officers and men of the active Militia who pass through their hands; but enough of this absurd priggishness exists to make one all the more keenly regret as particularly ill advised, this apparent encouragement by the government of the idea that the re-