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Women and the Militia



The new order at Niagara Camp—the Ladies and Afternoon Tea.

A MILITIA in which the women of the country are not interested cannot be a great success. If that interest is confined to the wives of the officers, and they glory only in the gaudy apparel in which their husbands are clad, it is not enough. The women must realize that the militia is the defence of the home and an essential portion of the training of the lad as he passes from youth to manhood.

In ye pioneer days, the mother on the farm and in the tiny village knew that the old musket or flint-lock on the wall might be needed any day to protect her and her children. To her defence was a real necessity. Hence every man could hit a six-inch target at fifty yards, and had all the necessary accoutrements and skill to qualify him as a militia-man. Between 1800 and 1850, every man was a member of the militia, serving without pay, and being fined if he did not parade. In 1840, the Province of Canada had an enrolled militia army of 250,000 men—or two and a half times the army which the Dominion of Canada has to-day. That army bought its own rifles, moulded its own bullets, supplied its own uniform, and drilled without pay. It was organized on the same principles as the Swiss army of to-day—the finest citizen army in the world and the least expensive.

WOMEN to-day are being brought into the position they lost fifty years ago, so far as the militia is concerned. For fifty years, the militia have gone to camp to have a good time—some of them, it is sad to say, to have a “boozy” time. Recently, however, the spirit has been changed. Liquor has been driven out of the camps, and the men are being taught not to go to neighbouring hotels. This is in accord with the spirit of the age. Men who go to camp go there for work—



THE TEA-POT.
General Lessard learning to manipulate the machine from which comes the cup that cheers but—

earnest work. They are seeking mental and physical development. Hence the movement to bring the women back to their ancient position of “moral supports.”

LAST week, a battery at Petawawa was found to have seven per cent. beer in its possession.

The case was proved to the satisfaction of the Minister of Militia and the resignation of the officers was accepted. Last year, the Minister was freely criticized because of his outspoken condemnation of some officers who imbibed freely at a Halifax dinner at which he was present. These and numerous other incidents have shown that the Minister is determined to have a militia army which can get along without strong drink.

One of the chief results is that the Minister and his various staff officers through the country are able to appeal to the women's organizations to lend their moral support to the militia. Last week, at Niagara camp, about one hundred ladies were present from Toronto and other places on special invitation from the staff—not for a holiday, but to see exactly how the camps are managed and how the moral and physical welfare of the soldiers in training is looked after. University women, W. C. T. U. women, Daughters of the Empire, and social workers of note were present to see if the “temperate army” was a misnomer or a reality. They were shown over the camp, and had every detail explained to them. At the conclusion, they tendered a vote of thanks to General Lessard and his staff for a pleasant and profitable day.

SUCCESS is crowning the efforts of the militia. Canada's citizen army is in good condition. It stands higher, perhaps, in the estimation of people than at any time in the last fifty years.