

the front. We are no believers in vital organic changes—the "Militia Law," was well devised," and only in matters of detail have any errors of magnitude been developed; we therefore concur with *Centurion* in the propriety of a commission composed of officers of the force, with power to examine those acquainted with the practical working of the system, and report on such parts of it as need revision, and there could be hardly a more competent person than himself to conduct such inquiry.

We have always advocated such additions to the "Militia Law," as would relieve the officers from expenses now incurred in keeping up the strength of the corps—the change of arms, clothing and store. On the one hand this should not affect the responsibility undertaken when the corps were first recruited, that of keeping up its numerical strength; on the other hand, no expense should be incurred by the individual; now as it is manifestly impossible to enforce the ballot as well as impolitic and undesirable, the real difficulty to be encountered is that arising from want of inducement to the rank and file, as *Centurion* puts it, \$1.50 to \$2.50 per day will not be sacrificed for a paltry 50 cents with the privilege of playing at soldiers for a week or two.

Any project having increased efficiency in view must seek it in throwing on the municipalities the expense of maintaining their volunteer contingents in a proper state, both as regards numerical strength and equipment.

It is a fact that the people of Canada are more lightly taxed than the people of any other country, and this is especially true as regards rural municipalities; it would follow that a revision of the "Militia Law" should look to that source as available for the increased expenditure, which as a matter of fact must be incurred; putting the question of the cities aside, it is possible to suppose that each county in the Dominion should supply a battalion of from six, eight, or ten companies according to population; that during the period of annual drill that the Government should pay each soldier 75 cents per diem and rations, and the municipality a like sum, so that the individual should incur no loss. In this case it would be supposed that the officers would give their services for a like sum as their circumstances would be presumed to be rather better than those of the rank and file, but provision should be made for the pay of their rank if such was required. The municipalities should provide all drill sheds, armories, and proper custodians of the public property confided to the volunteer, whose officers should be relieved of all responsibility for the same the moment the last parade was dismissed.

Service in the city corps should be one of the conditions of citizenship and ought to be exacted from every man physically capa-

ble of rendering it. A well devised system of organization would add materially to the security of life and property, lessen the cost of a local police force, and be attended with many advantages. City corps, as a general rule should only be moved from their localities in cases of great emergency and while it would be most desirable to leave it in the power of the Executive to use the Canadian troops for Imperial or other purposes abroad or at home, it would be well to establish the rule that for mere local purposes such as annual drills or manoeuvres, it would be best to leave the city contingents undisturbed. The reasons are sufficiently obvious, at certain periods of the year agricultural pursuits admit of the withdrawal of a portion of the people engaged therein without detriment, a phase which commercial or manufacturing industries do not present. Some adjustment of this description sketched out is a necessity of the period, for we are convinced that the military spirit of the people needs no stimulant beyond fair and liberal treatment. Colonel FLETCHER deserves the thanks of the community for raising this question.

The recent complication between Spain and the United States arising out of the capture of the piratical steam vessel the *Virginus*, and the execution of some of the marauders on board, do not redound to the honor of the latter country. The readiness to claim all vessels flying the flag of the Union, as well as every waif that takes shelter beneath its folds, a special object of maternal protection and regard, has led to some awkward results; in the present case, aided to some extent by the unfortunate social condition of Spain, but principally because she reckoned on the assistance of Great Britain, the United States succeeded in wringing a reluctant assent to the surrender of the piratical vessel and the remainder of her crew from the Spanish revolutionary government, under a pledge that the whole case should be adjudicated upon as the Spaniards say, by outside arbitrators; but Mr. HAMILTON FISH, with the ready mental reservations for which he is so remarkable, declares it was intended to be tried by the law officers of the United States, in other words, that power was to be principal, judge and jury in her own case—well it was submitted. The States' Attorney General (and was Chief Justice) declared that the vessel was a pirate, had no claim to carry the Union States' flag, and consequently Mr. HAMILTON FISH would be obliged to restore her and her surviving crew to Spain, in whose affairs he had so unwarrantably meddled. As he quibbled about the arbitration so he resolved (in order to please the people we suppose) to cheat even justice, he liberated the prisoners without any inquiry as to their acts and contrary to the stipulation, and it has been asserted he contrived to sink the *Virginus* on her passage to New York for adjudication,

the latter action is only asserted, but as it occurred with the *Florida*, a vessel the United States was compelled to restore to Brazil, the presumption is that the assertion is substantially correct. As a matter of course the Spanish people, especially the Cubans, are furious at the manner with which solemn engagements have been broken, justice over-ridden, and bullyism displayed by a contemptible foe. The following paragraph shows clearly what is thought of the honor of the United States. It is from the *Voz de la Poblacion* and dated Havana, December 30th.

"We did not expect anything else from the American Government. It has acted with the *Virginus* the same as it did with the *Florida*, in order not to be compelled to return that steamer to Brazil. Such nobility corresponds with the course of those who are patronizing the Cuban assassins and incendiaries in their enterprise. This will not exempt them from paying the full value of the *Virginus*, she being a prize of the Tornado, or from giving ample satisfaction and paying proper damage to Spain for the great injury America has inflicted in breaking its treaty stipulation scandalously in permitting the enlistment of men after such enlistment had been advertised in the journals, and protecting such men, when once out of the country with their flags and vessels of war upon the high seas and in foreign ports, thereby making themselves the accomplices of assassins and incendiaries. If the weakness or fickleness of Castelar, not of Spain, delivered to them the *Virginus*, the bad faith of the American Government buried the pirate ship in the bottom of the sea as it did the coal barge at the mouth of the dry dock in the Brooklyn navy yard, to prevent the departure of the *Arapiques*, which they feared so much. With such deeds they will gain everything except honor, and they will transmit to the pages of history that which, instead of being their glory, will cause their descendants to blush for having had such illustrious ancestors. It is useless to try to gather pears from elms. What Grant, Sickles, and the rest of the crew can produce, has already been fully demonstrated. For the great wrongs of the Spanish nation, terrible punishment is reserved."

"The *Diario* says:—"Punic faith and American justice will appear closely united in history; enjoying some unenviable celebrity. Punic faith was severely condemned by all ancient peoples. American justice will merit the name of iniquity among the moderns. The *Diario* referring to the liberation of the *Virginus* prisoners, says the word infamy rises to our lips, and is applicable to the conduct of the American Government officials. The liberation of these prisoners makes it appear as though they were innocent. We can only answer that American justice is iniquity and perfidy. This is the judgment which the signers of the Washington protocol reserved. This judgment is a bloody farce, committed against Spain before the eyes of humanity. When an American war vessel took a confederate cruiser from Brazil the act was declared a violation of the rights of the latter government, and the return of the cruiser ordered. The Americans sink her to avoid complying with the duty of returning her. We were told that Spain insisted upon the return of the *Virginus*; now we learn of its loss. We believe the motive of the United States for its action towards Spain is the same as towards Brazil; we believe, and we