

HIGH SCHOOL DEPARTMENT.

MILITARY DRILL IN HIGH SCHOOLS
AND COLLEGIATE INSTITUTES.

Some months ago the Dominion Government devised a scheme for the introduction of Military Drill into Schools and Colleges, of which due notice and explanation have been supplied to those interested through both the Ontario Minister of Education and the Department of Militia and Defence. The object of the Regulations is a good one ; but like every other scheme set on foot by those who have not a practical knowledge of the condition of our schools, it is unsuitable to the condition of Ontario, whatever adaptability it may have to that of the other Provinces. So far as we are aware, there have been no applications under this Order : the Hon. Mr. Masson will have found out by this time that to be successful the Regulations will have to be completely remodelled.

The Dominion Government proposes to supply gratuitously to those Schools or Colleges which can raise and maintain a company of 40 members, (1) the services of a drill instructor for one month, during which period there would be, we suppose, four or five hours' drill a day, and (2) rifles and accoutrements, and suitable books for Military Instructional purposes.

School Boards are in turn expected (1) to hold themselves responsible for the safe keeping of the arms and accoutrements, and (2) to see that the members of their company keep themselves supplied with uniform clothing of a pattern and colour to be approved by the Government.

Such, in brief, is an analysis of the Regulations. The practical objections to the scheme from an Ontario High School point of view, are as follows :—

It would seriously interfere with the regular school routine. Classes would be broken up, owing to the necessity for some of the members being present at the daily drills, and it would be literally impossible to maintain any kind of organization. A later Regulation allows the annual drill to be put in at two separate periods, but this would only slightly improve matters. It cannot surely be the intention of the Government to have the drill instructor perform his duties after the ordinary school hours ; and in these days when High School masters can hardly overtake the work now expected from them, it is extremely unlikely that they will sanction, even for a few weeks, such an interruption to the regular course of study. No doubt, from one point of view, such an interruption might be productive of good results to the pupils themselves : we are painfully aware that they are often too much hurried, and that the break in the usual routine of mental discipline would have manifold advantages, but the exigencies of the Master's position under our present system of Departmental Examinations are now such that in the race for prestige, and in some cases in the struggle for existence, there are few who would care to handicap themselves in this way. It is, further, very questionable whether even a month's steady drill is the maximum a well devised scheme should aim at. From the teacher's standpoint, drill should have an educative influence, and to have much value as such, it should form part of the studies in the school programme. This it does in several of our High Schools and Collegiate Institutes, in some of which it is taught by the regular masters themselves, who, for reasons which will be obvious to all teachers, form the most efficient class of instructors. The Gov-