

# THE CANADIAN MILITIA GAZETTE

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## Comment and Criticism.

IT will be remembered that when the tariff changes were announced in the House last session the words "Canadian Militia" were found to have been omitted from the list of those entitled to import military goods duty free. Protests came in from all quarters, only ceasing when after a few weeks, as further changes in the tariff were being announced, the Finance Minister explained that an omission had been made by a clerical error, which had since been rectified. Believing in the disposition of the government to act generously in the matter, the force at once came to the conclusion, without scrutiny of the correction, that it was the omission against which protests had been made which had been dealt with. But this turns out not to have been the case, as those who have since made importations have found to their cost, they having being charged the duty, which has been paid under protest, awaiting the return of the Minister of Customs. What was done in the House was as follows, as stated by Sir Charles Tupper (we quote from *Hansard*):—

"Add at end of the item (135) the words 'including the following articles when imported by the said government or through any of the departments thereof for the use of the Canadian militia:—arms, military clothing, musical instruments for bands, military stores and munitions of war.' That puts the Militia Department on the same footing as before, giving the same advantages as the army and navy enjoy. It was left out by a clerical error."

That is, the Militia Department may import duty free, but the force must pay the tax. Every officer who buys a uniform; every regiment which equips its band with new instruments; every man who has to purchase a rifle with which to compete in the matches—for the government issue are so old as to severely handicap their users—has to pay a tax of nearly one-third the purchase value. An attempt has been made to evade the unjust imposition by urging the militia department to nominally become the importers; but it will readily be seen that, however anxious the department may be to assist the force in the matter, it could not without endless trouble and expense, set up as a wholesale importing establishment through which the orders of the militia might be filled.

WITHOUT making an exact calculation, we believe that the duty sought to be imposed would amount to about \$100 on each officer's complete equipment, a very serious matter indeed. As a very large portion of the supplies cannot be procured except by importation, Canadian dealers being themselves importers, it will be seen that no development of home industry results from this tax, the only effect of

which is to swell the revenue by an amount of utter insignificance to the country, while those from whose pockets it is drawn can ill afford it, and in any case have a right to expect better treatment from a country which a couple of years ago was in such ecstasies over the performances of the force when suddenly called upon active service, and whose parliament was so generous in proclaiming its admiration to the world. It is to be hoped that steps will at once be taken to have the obnoxious duty removed.

ONE hundred men, the complement required, have volunteered from "A" and "B" batteries for service with "C," the new battery to be stationed in British Columbia. Of these forty-five were from "A" Battery and fifty-five from "B." Barrack accommodation is now being provided and as soon as the quarters are in readiness the men will proceed to the Pacific province. As an inducement to volunteer for this service the government offered ten cents per day in addition to the regular service and good conduct pay now received by the batteries, the additional ten cents to be held in reserve until the end of the three years term of enlistment. This extra pay has been granted in consideration of the higher rate of wages prevailing in British Columbia as compared with Eastern Canada, and the reserve held by the government will have a tendency to weaken the inclination to desert, which gold mining or other such prospects might lead a man to do in a moment of rashness. Lt.-Col. Holmes, the D. A. G. of the district, will be in command of "C" battery. The three other officers will go from the east. Of these it is understood two have been decided upon, Capt. Peters of "B" battery, and Lieut. Benson of "A" battery.

THE effort to recruit the new battery from the ranks of the British naval pensioners failed mainly on account of the stipulation that only unmarried men would be accepted. Had the department chosen to accept married men the volunteers would have been numerous, but this could not be done. Not only would the cost of transportation of the wives and families have been very great, but continuous heavy expense would have resulted by reason of the extra barrack accommodation required, and the increased ration issue. However, when the pensioners refused, the difficulty was very simply solved by calling upon the old batteries. A large number of civilians apparently anxious to secure a free passage to the Pacific applied for enlistment, but were in each case referred to the Kingston and Quebec batteries, which will need recruits to take the place of the out-going volunteers.

VALUABLE service has been performed by the Mounted Police during the past few months in the Kootenay district, British Columbia, where a marked improvement in the conduct of a certain portion of the community has been noticeable. It had at first been intended to withdraw the police this fall, but it is now stated to be likely that they will remain in the district all winter. It is probable that British Columbia will be called upon to pay the cost of the service, as the province is beyond the proper territory of the force. Concerning the matter of cost, it is gratifying to note that the per capita expense of maintenance