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Military Gazette

Successor to the Canadian Militia Gazette.

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Notes and Comments

It is to be hoped for the sake of public honesty, if for nothing else, that there is good foundation for the report that the Minister of Militia has decided to reconsider the decision to grant only eight days' pay to the city militia corps, and to allow twelve days' pay as usual. Meantime incalculable harm has been done by the feeling of uncertainty produced by the original decision of the government. The allowances to the militia have always been slim enough in all conscience, and the financial responsibility of the officers of city battalions very great even with a fixed annual revenue from pay to depend upon. Now that the government has established the principle that

at any time, even after annual drills have been performed, it can either reduce this revenue at will or cut it off altogether, and moreover has only been prevented by strong political influence just before an election from putting this principle into effect, the responsibility is vastly increased, and it is to be naturally feared will operate to weaken the already depleted ranks of the commissioned officers.

However, and we still presume that the story about reconsideration, which is given on very good authority, is correct, there is a silver lining to the cloud. It is most satisfactory to reflect, while the militia force is staggering under the succession of hard blows, dealt it by an indifferent or grossly incapable departmental administration, that the minister at present at the head of the department has the courage to acknowledge a mistake and the power and the will to promptly correct it.

Coupled with the statement of the government's reconsideration of its decision to cut down the pay this year, is a sinister report that only eight days pay will be allowed next year for the rural corps as well as the city battalions. If there is anything in the report it should certainly be communicated to the force at once, so as to give officers of corps ample time to think over their battalion financial arrangements before hand and other contracts for next year are negotiated.

There is meantime not the least doubt but that any reduction of the pay will result in at the best a cor-

responding reduction in the present efficiency of the force. The members of our battalions have been supplementing the sums formed by the funding of their annual pay to the full extent of their means to provide means for maintaining respectable bands, attractive armories and live regimental rifle associations, to equip and maintain bicycle, signalling and ambulance corps, etc., besides full dress head dress, leggings, overcoat straps, water bottles and other necessary articles of equipment which an indifferent country is too penurious to provide. The officers and men can do no more than they have been doing financially, even if the country would wish them to, and it is this, while appreciating the fact that the Canadian militia is not mercenary and does not drill for its paltry pay, that leads us to declare that any reduction in the allowance of annual pay will result in a great reduction of the efficiency of the force, and there is not much room for a reduction, goodness knows.

The government has never devoted to the militia force the attention it deserved or the money it required. At its very best the force never attained the degree of efficiency which local Dominion interests and the important position held by the militia in the great scheme of Imperial defence demands. It has not been the fault of the officers and men of the force. They have worked night and day and with a perfectly astounding devotion, have sacrificed both money and energy to bring the force to the very highest notch of efficiency. Patriotic self-sacrifice