

to the fact that the hostility of the irresponsible and irrepressible mobs across the border may bring it upon us at any moment, right, reason, and common sense to the contrary notwithstanding. War, if far from certain, is at least probable, and its mere possibility is enough to lay upon the loyal people of Canada, who will have the most to suffer, the duty of immediate and thorough preparation. The only military operation which, in view of their feeble navy and their unprotected seaboard, the Americans can undertake, is the conquest of Canada. Twice threatened and attempted, with the result of entire and shameful failure, owing to the nobility and valor of our colonists of those days, their third effort will be a desperate one. We must not forget that our five millions, backed up by all the troops the rest of the empire can spare us, will confront seventy millions of people whom we must not make the mistake of despising. The struggle will be a terrible one, therefore all the more speedy and thorough must be the preparation. Every man in the Dominion, capable of bearing arms, will have to be armed for the fray, and a gigantic undertaking, both as to cost and labor, it will be.

It would ill befit me, as an officer of the active militia, to express my views on the management of the force, and on the defenses of the country. All that I beg leave to do is to make some suggestions as to the organization of the reserve militia.

It should not be lost sight of, that much valuable information for our guidance is to be obtained from a study of the early part of the great civil war in the United States, and the disasters which befell the Federals at the outset, owing to the operation of the very causes which will unquestionably produce similar results with us, unless we move carefully and wisely at the outset. The United States volunteers, who formed the great bulk of their field force, were in character and constitution a force very similar to what our reserve militia would be, if put into the field at once. Nearly all the trained officers of the nation were southerners, and, by their aid, the rebels were able, in a very short time, to put in the field several armies of *soldiers*, whereas the Federals, among whom men and officers alike were totally ignorant of military life, or discipline, were for many months *armed mobs*. Bitter experience alone made soldiers of them. The officers were not selected on account of their fitness, real or imaginary, but on account of their local influence and importance, be it political, social or financial. With us, if we would avoid such disasters as Bull Run, fitness alone must be the principle upon which officers for the reserve militia must be selected, and in the mode by which the relative fitness of candidates is to be decided and ascertained will depend the usefulness of our forces.

The legal mode of organizing our reserve militia is to be found in R. & O., 1887, paragraphs 18, 19, and 20, and,

with due respect to the powers that be, I beg to point out that if those regulations be followed, dire disaster is very apt to follow. I think I am correct in saying that no enrolment under these paragraphs has ever taken place, at all events in this province, and therefore the reserve militia of Canada does not exist even on paper. We have only the machinery for raising such a force. Theoretically, under paragraphs 18 and 19, we have a lieutenant-colonel and two majors for each regimental division, and a captain and two subalterns for each company division. As a matter of fact, there must be many parts of the country where no such officers exist, and where they do, their commissions are dated so far back, that the men themselves must be in many cases long past usefulness for military purposes. Further, the size and population of the various divisions must be by this time in need of a thorough revision, owing to changes, in some cases increase, in others decrease. Very few, if any, of these reserve officers have had any training in arms at all, and as leaders they are out of the question. It would be a case of the blind leading the blind. Should the numbers of these reserve officers be filled up by the government in the ordinary way, it is almost certain that political influence, local social importance, and other such reasons would be the only guides to the selection. Some regimental districts would be too small, others too large, and a readjustment would have to follow. We have, however, in the active militia, and among gentlemen who have served as officers in that force for a time, a large body of men possessed of a very fair amount of military training, and in their hands should be left the organization of the reserve militia, and the selection (for recommendation to H. Q.) of officers for that force.

I beg to submit an outline of the scheme I suggest:

Let the D. A. G. of each military district suggest the names of a number of officers in the active militia, irrespective of rank, or residence, one for each county in his district to make an enrolment of all the men in that county liable to service, in the four classes mentioned in paragraph 10 of R. & O., each such officer being assisted by a sufficient number of steady non-commissioned officers from the active militia to ensure the expeditious completion of the roll. Let this officer, in the course of his enrolment, take careful note of the names, residences, and qualifications of such persons as he considers fitted for officers, and N. C. O.'s, as well as ascertain all necessary facts as to the age, &c., of such reserve officers as may already have been appointed, and receive applications from all who wish to have commissions. On the completion of the enrolment for the whole Dominion, let H. Q., after making allowance for men required to fill up the ranks of the active militia to war strength, make a new

division of the country into regimental and company divisions, fixing the number of officers and N. C. O.'s required. Let there then be selected and recommended by the D. A. G. of each district from the lists prepared by the enrolling officer for each county, the names of officers and N. C. O.'s to fill up the desired quota, and let all these men, as well as all reserve officers appointed under the old arrangement, be sent at once to one of the infantry schools for a three months' course of training. Company officers and N. C. O.'s could be thus obtained. Field officers and regimental staff, if not available among the material in the district, could be taken from the active militia, adjutants and sergeant majors being taken from the regular service or active militia officers of special merit and qualifications. The country in addition to pay should provide a suitable uniform for reserve militia officers.

By these means, should it become necessary to call out the force, we would from the outset have all the machinery necessary to commence effective military training of the reserve in all parts of the country at once. With an intelligent educated people like ours, a few weeks of hard work would suffice to make the force serviceable, and the actual work in garrison or field would soon complete what the preliminary training had begun. The license given in paragraph 18 to appoint non-residents should be taken advantage of to the fullest extent, wherever it became necessary in the interests of the public safety.

By some such scheme as this, which could be put into effect immediately, a large skeleton army could be trained, between this and spring, at a cost so small as not to be considered in comparison to the advantages to be gained, and then we would be ready at any moment on any emergency to call into being a force which would astonish the loud-mouthed gentlemen who talk so glibly of over-running Canada. God grant that the necessity may never arise, but let us not be caught napping. Such are my humble views, and I hope they may receive consideration.

Your obedient servant,

SUB.

Is There a Chance of War With the United States?

To the editor of CANADIAN MILITARY GAZETTE;

DEAR SIR,—The average newspaper editor in this country does not seem to have sized up the situation as regards the possibilities of war with the United States.

They are laboring under the impression that the war talk is confined to a certain number of papers, who for the sake of popularity or for political purposes, are making the most of the opportunity and twisting the tail of the unfortunate lion until that long enduring animal is wincing and becoming restive. Were these