

## CORRESPONDENCE.

[The Editor does not hold himself responsible for individual expressions of opinion in communications addressed to the VOLUNTEER REVIEW.]

To the Editor of the VOLUNTEER REVIEW,

SIR,—An editorial article which appears in your issue of the 20th inst., on the subject of the Ballot, contains, amongst other things, a number of truisms—allegations which none will feel inclined to controvert, but which as arguments for the maintenance in Canada of a purely Volunteer rather than a Ballot Force, appear to me to be of very little weight, if they do not entirely avoid the question at issue.

The real object of all military organization in the Dominion, in time of peace, is to diffuse amongst the people as large an amount as possible of military knowledge, which, in the event of war with the only people with whom we can ever be brought into collision, may with the least delay be made available. It is quite true that in order to effect this, the withdrawal of such a "number of men from the industrial pursuits of the country, as are necessary, is all that can be required." But as the Ballot will not withdraw a greater number of men from the industrial pursuits of the country than the present system, your article would not have lost much of its force if the above quoted paragraph had been entirely omitted.

That national industry, and consequently national wealth, must suffer by individuals being turned aside from profitable pursuits, is self-evident. But do you wish the interference to be drawn, that the time and pursuits of the class who volunteer, are of less consequence than that of those who delight to live at home at ease? I believe that every profession, business and trade, has hitherto been very fairly represented in the volunteer ranks of the Dominion.

How national industry and wealth would be more heavily weighted, by only an equal number as heretofore, being compelled to serve under a different system of enrolment, I certainly fail to perceive. Pardon me for suggesting that you have neglected to read carefully the Militia Act, of 1868, before writing your article, otherwise you would scarce have ventured on the assertion that the author of that Act (which is the foundation of the present Force,) reserved for time of war, the exercise of the power of enforcing the duty owed to the State. It has for the moment, no doubt escaped your recollection, that the Act is even minute in its provisions for the application of the Ballot, at any time, when either for drill or actual service enough men do not volunteer in any Company Division to complete the requisite quota.

I cannot think that many volunteer officers will feel inclined to agree with you, when you assert that the enforcement of compulsory service is not requisite by any means at present, because at the Brigade Camp of 1871, out of a total force of 43,174,

officers and men, the number mustering for the annual drill was 34,414, officers and men. This large muster, as I suppose you must call it, (though lacking something like twenty per cent. of what it should have been) is easily accounted for.

When there is any prospect of active service the companies fill up very readily, recruiting then becomes comparatively an easy task. At the period of the enlistment of the greater portion of the men who were present in the 1871 camp, the Fenian excitement had not subsided, and the company rolls throughout the Dominion were consequently, as a general thing, pretty full; and such being the case, it was of course possible to parade a considerable Force.

All this however is changed. No such excitement now prevails throughout the country, and it is anticipated that their period of enlistment having expired, a large proportion of those present at last year's Camps will claim their discharge.

As a result, I much fear that many skeleton companies and battalions will be paraded at the Camps of 1872. But if, contrary to general expectation, the Battalions should appear in their old strength, it will be as the result of efforts on the part of the officers, which the community should feel ashamed of allowing them to make. Possibly the volunteer system, *pur et simple*, might be kept on its legs for a little while longer, but only a little while, by allowing some of the old battalions to go down, and accepting companies in parts of the country where volunteering is as yet a novelty. But would such a course be consistent with a spirit of honesty and fair play to those officers who for long years have devoted their energies to the well being of the Force in their respective localities? Are the sacrifices which these gentlemen have already cheerfully made to be quietly ignored because they do not choose to go on to the end making fresh ones? Are they to be thrown aside like the rind of an orange, after the pulp and juice have been enjoyed? I think too well of our Canadian public, to imagine that any such course of proceeding would find favor with them.

As to levying a tax on such of the population as are not serving or have not served in the ranks, if practicable, which I doubt, it is certainly desirable whether the Ballot is or is not enforced. But as to relieving officers of volunteers from the onerous "burdens imposed on them," I consider it impossible; as such burdens are a result inherent in the system under which they serve.

A considerable portion of your Editorial is devoted to a dissertation on Prussia and the Prussian system, and you then triumphantly ask, "would it be possible to establish such a system in Canada? For without it, the Ballot, except in case of war, would be useless." Sir, no one in his senses wishes to establish any such system in Canada. Surely there can be little resemblance between a

system which compels every man in the kingdom, be he Prince or Peasant, to spend the best years of his life in being turned into a Barrack-yard soldier, and that urged by the advocates of the Ballot in the Dominion—a system which would compel the attendance in a Camp of Instruction of about two per cent of the male population for a period of sixteen days during each of three consecutive years;—a system which would withdraw from the ordinary pursuits of industry, no greater number of men, and for no greater length of time than is now supposed to occur under the present volunteer system. And if, failing to establish in Canada, the Prussian system in its integrity, the Ballot, except in case of war, is useless. How did the framers of our Militia Act happen to make the egregious blunder of providing for its use in time of peace? Or what did Sir George E. Cartier mean, when, in his speech at the Laprairie Camp, he promised that the Ballot should be put in force as soon as such a step was considered desirable by the officers of the Force, and that they had made their wishes known?

As an argument against the introduction of the Ballot, I confess I do not see much force in your assertion that "owing to the wide area Canada presents to enterprise, the greater part of these men instead of remaining in their Township would be probably scattered over the Pacific slopes &c."—for if it is an argumental, it applies equally to men trained under the Volunteer as under the Ballot system. As, however, I do not apprehend that our population will ever migrate, *en mass*, to the Pacific slopes or anywhere else, I am inclined to think that the greater portion of these men, when required, would be found in their respective Townships, or at least not so very far off but that they could be easily made available. If belonging to a battalion, still in reserve, and residing anywhere in the Dominion, any absent member could be compelled to join at once. Nor would he for a moment be in doubt as to where was his proper place, unless he had completely forgotten the locality and number of his Battalion.

But if it were required at a few days or weeks notice, to form up in service battalions, the partially trained men, who for the last ten years have been filtered through the volunteer ranks, I have some curiosity to learn the *modus operandi* which you would advise with a view to effecting the desired result. I cannot conceive that anything short of a *letée en mass* of the population, would ever enable the Government to avail itself of its services. And so very partially drilled would a large proportion of them prove to be, that I doubt whether the value of their services would much exceed that of totally undrilled men. That the people of the Dominion may not be much in love with cast-iron regulations, is possible; few people are so; but if the Canadians are so wanting in patriotism—so entirely given up to money