

tralia who see this, and are above the petty jealousies just mentioned; and many propositions with a view to amalgamation and federation are being from time to time put forward. The subject is daily growing more and more into notice, and no doubt action will follow at the proper time. But as these remarks are only introduction to the subject, we will give some few notes of the Victorian Military Forces, and more especially the inland and more mobile part.

The Victorian forces are well commanded, have the advantage of an efficient staff of Imperial (*i.e.* British Army) officers, and are animated throughout by a strong and lively military spirit, a spirit which is hereditary in their race. The whole force is under a Minister of Defence, who belongs, like in England, to the Parliamentary party for the time in office. There is a "Council of Defence," consisting of the Defence Minister, the Naval and Military Commandants, and three or four of the senior local officers, which, under regulations issued by the Governor-in-Council, directs and controls the organization of the naval and military forces, a unity of plan which might be worth our own consideration. Similarly, they have no War Minister.

The Military Staff consists of the Commandant, his orderly officer, an Assistant Adjutant-General, a Deputy Assistant Adjutant-General, a Deputy Assistant Adjutant-General for Artillery, a Commanding Engineer, a Principal Medical Officer, a Chaplain to the Forces, a Veterinary Surgeon, and an officer commanding the Victorian Mounted Rifles.

Nearly the whole of the present organization has grown up under the present Commandant and Assistant Adjutant-General. When they first arrived in Melbourne, the Ministry having had no experience in military affairs, fixed their pay and that of the rest of the Staff, and then gave them *carte blanche* to arrange everything else, even to the rank to be assumed by the Commandant and by each member of his staff.

The forces in non-commissioned officers and men consist of seventy Cavalry, 1,000 Mounted Rifles, 685 Garrison Artillery, 260 Field Artillery, twenty-four Nordenfolt battery, 1,800 Infantry—consisting of four battalions of Victorian Rifles, with four companies to each battalion—sixty-two Field Engineers (one company), sixty-one Submarine (Torpedo) Company, 3,000 Cadet Corps, 300 Mounted Police available as Cavalry, sixteen Medical Staff, 200 Permanent Artillery, and twenty-one permanent secretaries to Engineers.

Of these, the backbone is the Militia, the only "permanent" (or what we should call "regular") forces being the 200 Artillerymen (Garrison), section of Engineers (twenty-one), and the non-commissioned officers and men, Headquarters Staff, and a few Drill Instructors. All the rest are Militia, except the Cadet Corps (Volunteers) and the Mounted Police.

The general character of the whole force is decidedly efficient. There is good training, good will, energy, and even enthusiasm. The members of the force, both officers and men, are most anxious to learn and practise everything they can. They look up with great respect to the British officers and non-commissioned officer instructors, and there is much intelligence among the men, and more among the officers, many of whom are managers of, or hold important positions in, large commercial firms, or are engaged in other civil employments which would apparently take up all their time. Why and how they find leisure to attend so perseveringly as they do to military duties and exercises is variously accounted for. Some say it is patriotism, others that they like wearing uniform and being called Colonels, Captains, etc.—it is probably a combination. There exists a very friendly feeling between the British and local officers. There is in Melbourne a military club (the United Service Club), where they frequently meet. This, like all the Victorian military institutions, is growing and developing, and will soon require larger premises than it occupies at present.

The physique of the men, both of the permanent and Militia forces, is good; in height they average somewhat more than Infantry and Cavalry of the Line in England; but they do not give the idea of being stronger, broader shouldered, or deeper-chested—perhaps even, in proportion to their height, a little less so—and we should imagine they do not weigh so much. People born in Australia, though strong and wiry, have, as a rule, less of that solid and somewhat beefy description of strength which is supposed to characterize the typical Britisher. The general intelligence of all ranks is remarkably good, nearly all the men being engaged in some business or occupation which obliges them to think. The men of the Militia, though active and serviceable-looking men, have not, either singly or in masses, that appearance of being "well set up" which marks our regulars at home. On the whole, their general turn-out, manner of marching and carrying themselves and their rifles, remind one very much of the best of our home Volunteer regiments.

The following is an outline of the conditions of service for the permanent force: Men to engage for five years, with the option, if approved of by the Commandant, of extending their service for a second period of five years. Recruits to be engaged and sworn in under the Discipline Act (of which more hereafter); to be not less than nineteen

or more than thirty years of age. Minimum height, 5 ft. 8 in., chest measurement not less than 35 in., of good character, able to read and write fairly well, and to pass medical examination. Men recently discharged from the British Service, under forty-five years of age, and men of special qualifications, may be engaged and sworn in if approved by the Commandant, provided they pass the medical examination, although they do not comply in every respect with the above conditions. The men receive a free kit on joining, and a yearly supply of clothing afterwards, much as in the English Army. Their pay, including deferred pay, and, on occasions, working pay, their rations, also regulations for married establishment, etc., are all arranged on principles similar to those in vogue in the British Army. The men of this force are generally well-conducted; but there are too many cases of desertion. The Commandant may summarily reduce in rank any warrant officer or non-commissioned officer, or may fine any warrant officer, non-commissioned officer, or private for misconduct, or discharge them, independently of any other punishment they may be liable to. The uniform of the Artillery and Engineers is almost exactly the same as that of the Royal Artillery and Royal Engineers at home. In hot weather they wear white helmets, as with us in India.

The groundwork of the whole structure (naval and military) is "The Discipline Act of 1870," which has been slightly altered and amended from time to time. It sets forth that the Governor may, on behalf of Her Majesty, place in commission any armed vessels that the Parliament of Victoria may direct to be maintained, and may engage the services of any persons to serve in the military and naval forces upon certain terms and conditions. Every person so engaged to take an oath of allegiance, becoming, thereby, subject to the provisions of this Act, and bound to serve Her Majesty as a member of the force in which he may have engaged. The Governor to appoint officers to the naval and military forces of Victoria, and issue commissions to such persons under his hand and the seal of the colony; and may withdraw, annul, alter, or amend all such commissions . . . and so on with regard to appointment of warrant officers and non-commissioned officers, fixing amount of pay and allowance, etc. Every person so engaged to be liable, by proclamation in the Government *Gazette*, to be called out for service when required, and to march or embark on board ship as ordered; and if, without good grounds, he neglect to do so, he is liable to punishment as a deserter. Clause 11 contains an important provision—*viz.*, that all persons so assembled to serve shall, from the time of such assembling until their services shall be legally dispensed with, be subject, if serving in the military forces, to all provisions contained in the Act of Parliament "now in force in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland for the government of Her Majesty's Army." Then follow clauses treating of court-martial, and empowering commanding officers of corps to deal with certain minor offences; for instance, "the commanding officer may take notice of any minor offence against discipline by fine not exceeding twenty shillings, or solitary confinement not exceeding twenty-four hours"; also clauses dealing with the arrest of deserters, and with other matters which cannot here be given *in toto*. These are briefly some of the chief provisions of the Act upon which the whole system is founded.

(To be continued.)

War's New Horrors.

(London Standard, August 30.)

After all, it has been found impossible to leave the question of high explosives out of the programme of modern warfare; and we have just learnt by practical demonstration on our own shores that we have neglected to provide ourselves with a formidable weapon of war which is already in the hands of the foreigner. France has not neglected this question, and she is ahead of us. Her chosen explosive is melinite, and with this she has armed herself to an extent which may be known to our war office, but of which the British public have no conception. All the requisite materials, in the shape of steel projectiles and the melinite for filling them, have been provided for the French service, and distributed so as to furnish a complete supply for the army and navy. Whatever may be said as to the danger which besets the use of melinite, the French authorities are confident that they have mastered the problem of making this powerful compound subservient to the purposes of war. No doubt, they have some painful experiences to record. An accidental explosion of melinite shells took place last year at the government arsenal at Belfort, and it is acknowledged that five soldiers were killed and eleven seriously injured. But according to another account which reaches us, the mischief was more serious than this, and of those who were killed the destruction was so complete that only a few fragments of their remains could be found. Concerning the composition of this explosive great secrecy is observed by the French Government, as also with regard to the experiments that are made with it. But the Armstrong company at Elswick have secured possession of melinite by virtue