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The Financial Aspect of Volunteering.

Parliament having assembled, it is now in order for those members of the militia having grievances, to have them ventilated. About as senseless a way as can be imagined to right a wrong is to send a long letter to some opposition newspaper which will make political capital out of it against the party in power. The government of the day is not likely to be possessed of any desire to injure the force, or impair its usefulness, but on the other hand, for its own credit's sake, must desire to secure the greatest possible efficiency at the smallest possible cost. There is wide diversity of opinion as to the means which should be adopted to attain this end. Let the subject be debated in parliament, where each military member could give expression to his views as to possible improvements in the present system. Any reasonable change unanimously asked for would we feel confident not be refused by the Minister, unless insurmountable financial difficulties presented themselves.

There is one line in which we certainly think legislation should be asked for at once. That is, the making of more adequate provision for the future support of militiamen disabled wholly or partially while on active service, or for compensation to dependent relatives for the breadwinner's death in the service of his country. It is bordering on the ridiculous to continue to apply to the militia of this country—a body serving for love, not for the pay they receive—pension conditions not more generous than those paid in the professional army of the mother land. This matter of providing new regulations for the issue of pensions is one that requires immediate attention, as we believe there are several cases of great hardship arising out of wounds or illness contracted in the Northwest rebellion which the department finds itself under the present law unable to adequately relieve.

It is a costly thing sometimes to be even a private soldier in the militia. Quite commonly it happens that a corps is called out in aid of the civil power, the men being obliged to be under arms for a week or two weeks. The pay allowed is 50 cents per day. Now, the average militiaman earns when at his regular work about \$2 a day, so that for every day he gives to the service of his country he is \$1.50 out of pocket, to say nothing of the risk he runs, for it goes without saying that soldiering is not the occupation most sought after by those taking insurance risks. True, he is fed and lodged while on service, but against this may be put the numerous incidental expenses which he has to pay out of his own pocket. The net daily loss per man is therefore about \$1.50. After a week's duty he is out \$9; after two weeks' \$18. A company of

forty-five lose between them \$800 pay in the fortnight; a six company battalion out for that period lose nearly \$5,000 in wages alone. This is about the amount lost semi-annually by many a regiment attending district camp. Why should such a state of affairs exist. The men who give their services in the militia should not thus be called upon to pay also a special monetary contribution. "Who goeth to warfare at his own cost?" Who indeed but the militiaman of Canada!

Far be it from us to advocate the transformation of the Canadian militia into a host of mercenaries, ready to go soldiering simply because it pays. But it is beyond dispute surely that when a volunteer is asked to quit his civil employment to go on emergent military duty, he should not have to march off with the consciousness that the military ardour which had induced him to join the force is now about to cost him many dollars which perhaps he could ill spare at that time. This increased compensation should apply to time spent in brigade camp as well as in the sterner duties of service in aid of the civil power. The members of a corps drilling at headquarters in the evening only, do not as a rule thus lose any ordinary employment pay, but if they did as much drill as their rural friends who spent their allotted time in camp it would hardly be fair not to increase their compensation also.

Topics of the Week.

Giving a second instalment of the contents of the annual report of the Department of Militia and Defence we publish this week the report of Lieut.-Col. Irwin, Inspector of Artillery and of Lieut.-Cols. Montzambert and Cotton, assistant inspectors. These reports will well repay perusal by artillery men, who should profit by the apparently frank criticism so freely bestowed. It will be noticed that Col. Irwin suggests radical changes in the drill system both for field and garrison artillery. It is to be hoped that his recommendations will not be allowed to be dropped in silence.

Resolved not to be cheated of their class firing, even if there were no public ranges available, the Victoria Rifles of Montreal secured permission to shoot in their Morris tube gallery instead. The results of this interesting practice, unique in the history of volunteering in Canada, will be found elsewhere in this issue. The Vics deserve great praise for their enterprise and congratulation upon the possession of the facilities for putting the new idea into effect.

"Doubting Thomas" will have his time fully occupied for a while should he think fit to take up the challenge, printed in this issue, of the Fenelon Falls marksmen whose skill he impliedly disputed in his letter published two weeks ago. It is due to the challengers to state that their letters arrived at this office just too late for insertion in last week's issue.