

THE CANADIAN MILITIA.

We see from critiques in some of our contemporaries, that Lieut. Col. Fletcher has written a pamphlet on the Militia system of Canada. We intended reproducing the fullest we could find, that of the *Globe* before this, but have been prevented by the pressure of political matter that would stand no denial. However, we publish, to-day, our contemporary's review, which we doubt not will possess an interest for most of our readers, though it is a little old. We need hardly say that the subject is one in which the people of this country have always manifested lively concern. Events for the last twelve years would have kept the Militia before the public eye, whether inclined to think much about the property of a permanent institution of this kind or not. People had begun to grow indifferent as to the Militia, when the American Civil War broke out, but a change then took place, and the occurrence of the Trent difficulty evoked general enthusiasm in regard to its improvement in organization, strength and all the conditions requisite to an efficient defensive force. We had next the Military Schools, of the Sandfield Macdonald Ministry, changes in machinery, in the staff, and a variety of experiments intended to render our citizen soldiery capable of any service, defensive or offensive. In our opinion some wise measures were taken, and some good achieved. It would be wonderful not to say very discreditably, were it otherwise. For have we not had Colonels of the Regular Army, and the officers of all grades below them in our Militia, gives us the benefit of their experience, which has been supplemented by that of the Generals and other officers in command of Her Majesty's Army in Canada for many years? We have had Generals Lord Russell Sir John Michel, McDougall, Wolseley, Cols. Atcherley, Ross, and a host more. With all his professional light and skill we might have been expected to strike out some system worthy of confidence and adapted to our circumstances. Moreover, though not a wealthy people, we have spent a good deal of money on our Militia, about a million and a half per annum of late years, and have given our Regular Commanders in chief, or Adjutants General, ample opportunity of distinguishing themselves as military organizers, tacticians and administrators. They have experimented, planned and executed both in the field and the closet. The upshot of it all is dissatisfaction at the state of the Militia, owing to conspicuous failure in many parts of the country, discontent among officers, and apathy with the men. Of course a large turn out can be got in certain parts of Ontario, with energetic drumming up on the part of popular officers, but such displays are due more to respect for individual commanders than interest in the cause, or any agreeable operation of the militia machinery. From various causes the force is not in good humour, *esprit de corps* is wanting, and that pride which stimulates officers and men to do their best to master their drill and make a good appearance on parade. We have not space, even had we the requisite knowledge, to analyze the causes of this state of things; it is as well, however, to point it out, leaving to competent authorities the duty of providing a remedy for the ills and deficiencies existing. There is considerable difference of opinion abroad as to the best force for Canada. Some, though we shall not say we are of the number, believe that a good force like the Irish Police, picked men, trained and quartered like sol-

diers ready to move wherever ordered, and not constantly changing in *personnel*, would be the best for us. This idea, springs from the assumption that war with the States is unlikely. Others contend that a militia upon the present plan, but improved in many respects, would be more suitable. Col. Fletcher would prefer a small military force as a model for our militia, and a nucleus, with a set of training schools for commissioned and non commissioned officers. All these schemes are worthy of consideration, with a view to the adoption of some one promising permanence and efficiency.

We have had, it must be confessed, a fair experience of British military officers in connection with our Militia. They have had large grants of money and abundant latitude in their, no doubt, well meant undertakings. Admitting then, that the force is not what it ought to be, might it not be well to see if we have not in Canada some men capable of dealing with this question, and suggesting the necessary reforms? Canadians, like Col. Powell, for example, the Acting Adjutant General, know best the resources of the country in men and material, while their acquaintances with the temperament and habits of our people is far more intimate and reliable than that of mere military birds of passage from England, such as we have had already. The above officer has spent nearly twenty years in the force, has risen through its various grades, has helped to work the different systems introduced here, and, being an intelligent, painstaking official, must have noticed their virtues and defects. He is, like Col. Stevenson, of Montreal, a man who takes a pride in the force, who has devoted all his time and talents to its demands and interests, and must be competent to propound views on the subject deserving of public consideration. Col. Powell is now engaged in the preparation of the Annual Militia Report, we understand in which he will set forth some careful reflections upon the Militia and make well-considered recommendations, with the object of its improvement, to the advantage and satisfaction of the people of Canada. We shall look for this report with no little interest.—*Ottawa Times*.

COLONEL FLETCHER ON THE MILITIA SYSTEM.

Colonel Fletcher, the Military Secretary of His Excellency the Governor General, has in a pamphlet of 20 pages, given the people of Canada his views on the present condition of the militia in the Dominion, and on what he believes to be necessary to make it really efficient for the purpose it was intended to serve.

The basis of the present system is that all the male population from 18 to 60, not exempted or disqualified by law, and being British subjects, should be enrolled for military purposes. This force, numbering for the four older Provinces 694,008, is divided into four classes. The first of these consists of the unmarried and widowers without children between the ages of 18 and 30. The second the same description of persons under 45. The third, all those between 18 and 45 who are married, or are widowers with children. While the fourth comprises all the enrolled population from 45 to 60. From this number the active militia, limited at present to 43,000, is raised by voluntary enlistment and engaged for three years. If necessary a ballot may be restored to, but this has never yet been tried. The period of yearly drill for this force is, according to

to law, not more than sixteen days and not less than eight. The force assembled for such drill in 1872 was 30,144, and the estimated cost for the whole was \$1,549,400. It may be, then, concluded that to have a little over 30,000 volunteers drilled, as we have them at present, costs about a million and a half of dollars. The question then proposed by Colonel Fletcher, and discussed in this pamphlet, is, whether or not for the money a more available and soldierly body of troops could not be organized, and one more suitable for purposes either of attack or defence, should either in the course of time be necessary. The point is discussed with perfect fairness, though, of course, with the strong leaning of a military man for a regular standing body of troops, and with, perhaps, and undue fear of possible hostilities between this country and the States. At the same time, it is only fair to keep in view that possibility is the only reason for having a militia force at all; and if it is desirable to have such an organization, it is desirable to have it thoroughly efficient and prepared for every emergency.

We do not even give an outline of Colonel Fletcher's argument. Sufficient to say that he holds that the tendency—as things are at present, with no regular forces to be taken as a standard of what military training and effectiveness ought to be—will always be towards deterioration both in drill and the whole military organization of the force. To counteract this while the defence of the country would always be in the militia, the Colonel would have a small permanently embodied force which might form a model, and which might also furnish competently trained officers, both commissioned and non-commissioned to the active militia when on drill or on active service. He would have three training schools, at each of which part of this small force, consisting of the three arms—cavalry, artillery, and infantry—would be stationed and drilled. To these schools all officers recommended for commissions would be required to go for six months, and the receipt of their commissions would depend upon the ability displayed during the course of instruction. Whenever a regimental promotion took place (and no other should be allowed), the person so promoted ought to attend three months at one of these military schools, and be required to secure a certificate before such promotion was confirmed. Then the privates, &c., at those schools he would have enlisted for a year from the localities to which the militia regiments of the district belongs with further enlistment, if they chose, of five years more. These could go out at the yearly drill, and be corporals and sergeants in their local companies. In this way there would be diffused in time, in the estimation of the Colonel, a thorough military drill, and a sufficiently high standard to be held up to all the embodied volunteers as a model. There are other suggestions as to the best manner of having the yearly drill of the general force made as effective as possible.

The expense of the whole, according to Colonel Fletcher's idea, would not be more than a million and a half dollars, and that according to the following scale:

Three schools, each \$200,000.....	\$600,000
Allowance to cadets undergoing training.....	95,000
Yearly training, of 23,000 officers and men for sixteen days.....	400,000
Ordinary Contingent Militia Service.....	489,000

—*Toronto Globe*.

\$1,584,000