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### Provincial Subsidies.

It is altogether probable that one of the prominent questions to be debated at the coming session of Parliament will be that of subsidies to the provinces. Events of recent years indicate that Quebec will, in any case, demand an increase. In July last, at the great banquet of the "National" party, held in Montreal, the HON. MR. MERCIER, the leader, both nominal and real of that party, devoted his entire speech to an advocacy of further claims on the Dominion treasury; and since that date, the disclosure of the lamentable state of the finances of the province is not a good omen for the withholding of the demand. With an excess of liabilities over assets, amounting to \$16,000,000, and with an expenditure for the last financial year of \$1,500,000 over and above the income, either must some radical means of retrenchment be introduced or a new source of revenue established. This latter course is that most likely of adoption, for the present, at all events. The history of the subsidies shows a gradual but steady increase over the amounts first allowed to the several provinces; and when we note that the original grants were made with the special expressed proviso that they were to be in full settlement of all future demands, one cannot but regret that encroachments were ever permitted. Once begun, such a practice is difficult to stop. It encourages gross extravagance to be incurred by the provinces; it makes the people careless of the form and machinery of their local governments; and, should their further claims be disallowed, tends to create a mingled feeling of irritation and jealousy against the Dominion treasury, as a refusal of a just demand. Too many of our provinces retain methods of government at once antiquated, useless and expensive. There is far too much local, far too little central rule. The few subjects with which it is best for the provinces concerned alone to deal, could be attended to at an enormous saving of both time and money by a simple assembly of the people's duly elected representatives without many of the costly surroundings that at present are attached to our local parliaments, be they ever so small. This once effected, and its financial benefits appreciated, the voice of the nation will demand that the pruning-knife be also applied to many costly luxuries in the central government. Efficient government at the least expense should be the war-cry, if taxation is to be reduced. Towards the attainment of this the first step should be a determined refusal by the Dominion government to any increase in the provincial payments, and in this we think they will receive the support of the best classes in the community.

### The Needs of the Militia.

From the manner in which the new commander of Militia has gone about his work, it is evident that he is determined to do all in his power to make the force an efficient one, by, to as great a degree as possible, adopting the methods in use in Great Britain and the Continent. With frequent field-days of a practical—not parade—nature, with the in-

struction and drill of all the militia year after year, and with an occasional muster of many battalions for a few days manœuvres in the open, he could bring the whole force up to as high a state of efficiency as is now held by a few city battalions. Two things are certain: that in these measures he will have the hearty concurrence and help of nine-tenths of the officers and men of the force, and that, just as surely will he and his backers meet with as great a degree of opposition from the drill-ignorant civilians in Parliament, who unfortunately have a voice in militia matters. A perusal of the Reports for many years back will show, with increasing regularity, the same suggestions, the same requests, the same earnest demands for increased grants for military purposes; and beyond a modified acquiescence in the Major-General's wishes for a greater number of permanent troops and schools of instruction, nothing has been done. In new and improved arms and equipment, in the regular annual drill of all corps, and many other *desiderata*, the Canadian force is woefully behind the age—in fact is no better off than it was twenty years ago. The blight here, and to a lesser degree in England, is the dependence on civilian members of Parliament for the necessary financial grants. Many of them know nothing whatever of military matters or requirements, and their interest in the force is limited to unfavourable criticism. Into such persons it is necessary to try to instil patriotism and common sense, although we fear the task is an almost impossible one. No man who has a pride in his country and is anxious for her material growth but will do what he can to aid and develop both the sentiment and practical working of her measures for defence or attack in a national emergency; and further, no one can lay claim to ordinary common sense if he willfully ignores or hurts the means for the suppressing of trouble or insurrection, which, if unchecked, would mean serious damage to national institutions and consequent wide-spread financial upheaval. Increased liberality from the country to its militia is earnestly wanted at once. Compared to the population, the actual number of militiamen is absurdly small; and when nearly one-half of these drill but once in three years, and all have only an obsolete equipment, the situation becomes a disgrace to the country. The Royal Military College and the permanent Schools of Instruction are doing splendid work. The great wants of the force are; means sufficient for all to have practical training once every year, more occasions for field manœuvres and an improved equipment. These measures, combined with a gradual transfer of militia matters into the hands of the military authorities only, would soon render the force thoroughly efficient.

### Portugal.

The efforts made by Portugal to get a sound thrashing from England, are becoming so persistent that it will seem almost cruel to her to delay much longer. Since the beginning of the African dispute, her persistent animosity to her old friend has been so marked and even aggressive that it seems evident that no pacific measures will please her people. From the experience of old days it is not improbable that a very slight lesson would quickly convince them of the folly of their course, but it now seems equally improbable that anything short of that lesson will suffice. When in January, 1890, LORD SALISBURY sent his *ultimatum*, most people thought that such action would have shown the country that Great Britain had determined on her line of action, and that continued claims on the Mashonaland territory would only bring serious trouble; but the results that immediately followed the receipt of the despatch, the violence offered to British subjects and British ships, and the virulent denunciation of everything British, showed the fixed resolve of the people to persist in their demands. In spite of the treaty, aggressive action against the East African Company has steadily continued, and has now culminated in the imprisonment of its officials, and the hauling down of the flag on a British vessel. Men can bear insult; but to touch the Union Jack is to rouse a feeling in every part of its Empire that is hard to suppress. Portugal presumes on her weakness; but there is a danger of carrying the presumption to too great a length.

# The Dominion Illustrated Prize Competition, 1891. QUESTIONS.

THIRD SERIES.

- 13.—Give particulars of the mention of one of the first proprietors of the Island of Montreal?
- 14.—State the name of a retired officer in the British Army, who is an artist.
- 15.—Where is it mentioned that tea is intoxicating?
- 16.—In what article and under what name is mention made of a new magazine, whose main object will be to aid in ameliorating the sufferings of the poor.
- 17.—Give details of the mention of a great defeat sustained by France in 1692.
- 18.—On what page appears an item relative to a portage of fifty miles through the woods?

NOTE.—All the material necessary for correctly answering the above questions can be found in Nos. 131 to 143 of the "Dominion Illustrated," being the weekly issues for January, February and March.