

Militia Report.

The staff of the Militia is spoken of in complimentary terms as follows. "The present district staff are careful and painstaking officers, some with long military training and service. I have reason to speak in high terms of the zealous attention they apply to perform their duties. They have afforded myself and the Adjutant-General cordial assistance and support during my service in this command." Coming from the general officer commanding, these are no idle words—when he accords praise it has been earned.

He goes on to say:—"In case of war the existing staff would probably, as a general rule, not be removed from their sphere of action" for obvious reasons, and points out the desirability of having brigade camps "in order to practice officers in the operations and manoeuvres of handling large bodies of men." We believe this desirability amounts to an absolute necessity. "In case of war" are words of ominous import to those who have studied the actual working of our present militia system, or who will take the trouble to consider what these words imply. To us they savor of Isandlwana. In case of war who is to head the militia? Who has been instructed with this object? What facilities are afforded under the present system for officers acquiring the most difficult of studies—"the art of war"? Commanding generals must have confidence in themselves, in the Government, and in their men. The men must have confidence in their generals. Drilling 36 hours per annum in a drill shed by gaslight will not create this feeling. Nothing short of the nearest approach to actual service, serving together in camps, marching, practice in taking up positions, etc. can enable officers to qualify in this respect—and this carried out under some one qualified to point out errors of judgment, etc. Officers "can no more be extemporised without practical experience than the driver of a locomotive on a railway." To qualify young men for mercantile occupations, they have to spend years in buying and selling—in becoming acquainted with every little detail. This is necessary where money is invested. Where human life is concerned, it would appear that no such qualification is necessary. Our leaders must be born to command. "In case of war" is an eventuality which should not be shirked on economic grounds. "A Government which neglects its army under any pretext is culpable." The following paragraph is very mildly yet plainly put to those who care to understand. "It is noteworthy what a staff is considered necessary for civil departments, whether of Government, of banks or counting houses. Their duties are conducted in comfortable offices at regular and fixed hours, with no skilful and active enemy in the field to resist or cope with; how much greater is the need for trained and experienced staff officers for an armed force, where want of skill and practical knowledge, with the confidence to be acquired only in years of military study, might cause

IRRETRIEVABLE DISASTER AND LOSS OF LIFE."

The economy which persists from year to year in neglecting to properly train either officers or men—in using up the reserves which were accumulated—in hatching disaster for our troops "in case of war"—must be admitted by every honest man to be false, and productive only of national ruin and disgrace.

We quote the following paragraphs in full, but we would urge that 10,000 men properly trained would be better than even the 20,000 men who have passed through the annual trainings of the past few years. When it is understood that commanding officers cannot rely on having the same men for two consecutive trainings—that men are taken to fill up the ranks without signing the service rolls—that in some instances neither officers or men have taken the oath of allegiance to the Sovereign, we feel confident that most of our readers will agree with us that 10,000 good reliable men, properly trained from year to year, would be worth even 40,000 *casuals*.

A commander of forces in presence of an enemy is bound to have the services of a trained and skilful body of staff officers of arms, in the interest of the army on trust to his guidance.

To drill and discipline in peace time an army of all commensate with the need of Canada, is obliged to undertake a serious work is evidently out of the question; consequently all that can be attempted is to maintain a small force which would, on the threat of hostilities, serve as a foundation of one much larger. With the object in view, it would follow that it might be preferable, with given sum of money, to increase efficiency, even at the expense of some small reduction in numbers. Canada has an excellent organization, but, perhaps, rather widely spread for the parliamentary appropriation; it might be preferable to maintain the number only that can be sufficiently disciplined to serve for being adequately increased in time of war. There should be a careful supervised organization of the reserves of 650,000 men, and the should be supplies of arms and ammunition, at a proportion of at least than 300 rounds per rifle, maintained for 100,000 men. A delicate amount of time to improve discipline and drill is still, however, a prominent defect; a more extended period is a great want and an important reform; but while this extension is not possible for 43,000 men on the sum now voted by Parliament for drill a training, would it not be prudent to reduce somewhat the number still further, so as to afford the 20,000, which might for a time present the active militia of Canada, a reasonable period and arms for being more serviceably moulded. It would at the same time be unfair to overlook the large amount of voluntary exertion on behalf of national defence, by which Canadians are honorably distinguished; and this spontaneous energy will doubtless be in the future, when revenues increase, to urge the Legislature to extend more liberally towards their national defence, and keep up the martial spirit, and strengthen the military position of the Dominion.

Meanwhile, until that good time arrives, we are absorbing a stock of rifles, equipment and clothing, and this is a very serious and important matter.

In the annual report of 1876 a warning was given at page 43, and in last year's, at pages 9 and 10, that such difficulties were approaching, and so far as relates to clothing, this is now fulfilled. The yearly supply does not meet the yearly wants, and so the service is absorbed. With a force of 43,000 men we should require about 6,000 suits yearly, the result to be expected is plain. I do wish to see the reduction I have alluded to in the active militia carried out beyond the affiliated corps specified before; but if present active force is to be maintained creditably, a larger annual vote for clothing at all events is an apparent necessity. An attention to the stock of rifles and cartridges is equally so, and I trust attention may be given to these items. It should be noticed that a large quantity of cartridges is annually purchased by various rifle associations, and that the amount paid for it, being credited to the Receiver-General, is therefore lost to the Militia Department.

The following remarks appear in the report with reference to the reports of the Deputy Adjutant-Generals of the Militia Districts:—

The reports of the several military districts will be found to contain detailed information in the Appendix, No. 1. Lieut.-Colonel Taylor gives a justly favorable account of the troops in District No. 1, and comments upon their general efficiency, being well supplied with arms, accoutrements and uniform, and their steady attention to drill. The voluntary guard furnished during the Vice Regal progress in September, referred to in terms complimentary to the corps that participated. The exposed position of the County of Essex, on the extreme frontier of western Ontario is also referred to. It is important an efficient battalion should at that point to cover Windsor. The subject was under consideration of the Government some months ago, but I have received orders with reference to it.

Lieut.-Colonel Durie reports likewise, in general favorable terms of the corps in Military District No. 2, and refers to the ception of the Governor-General and Her Royal Highness Princess Louise in Toronto, and the review of the troops on Garrison Common on that occasion. The remarks of Lieut.-Colonel Murray, commanding 3rd Battalion, annexed to this report are pertinent to the question of instructing officers and sergeants. He says, in all cases when companies are commanded by intelligent and energetic officers who understand their duties, everything goes well, when the reverse is the case, the company is severely badly drilled, and not interested in the performance of their several duties.

Lieut.-Colonel Van Straubonze reports very fully on the several corps inspected in No. 3 Military District, and with a generally favorable tendency. He specially refers to the 48th Regiment under Lieut.-Colonel Williams, M. P., and expresses his belief that it is not a finer rural battalion in the Dominion. He remarks the impropriety I have before alluded to, in the want of sufficient care on the part of officers when enrolling their men to ascertain that they don't belong to any other corps—he has discovered several men this year drilling twice, and in order to put a stop to it, as far as possible, he suggests as I have already done in other works that a certificate be added to the acquaintance roll—"that of man whose name appears on this roll is a bona fide member of this company, having signed the service roll for three years' engagement, and taken the oath of allegiance." I had also recommended that each roll should be called over in presence of the inspecting officer, and that the captain should likewise give verbal assurance upon honor that all conditions had been complied with. By these means more care will be taken by officers, and a stop put to taking men at the last moment to the ranks for inspection. It is only by mere chance that an inspecting officer can discover these irregularities, as men have been known to drill twice in the same year under assumed names.

Lieut.-Colonel Jackson, Military District No. 4, gives a full account of the corps trained this year, and very naturally states brigade camps of exercise. He considers the difficulty of procuring qualified officers is on the increase from want of established system of instructional schools. He remarks on a variety of uniforms used in his district, some in the same of wearing patrol jackets of different material and shape, with dresses of different patterns, and sword belts and swords of different