



The Volunteer Review

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CORRESPONDENCE.

[The Editor does not hold himself responsible for individual expressions of opinion in communications addressed to the VOLUNTEER REVIEW.]

THE INVASION OF CANADA.

To the Editor of the VOLUNTEER REVIEW,

SIR:—In writing for the amusement or instruction of your readers the narrative of the invasion of Canada in 1874. I have been chiefly actuated by two reasons viz:—

First to combat the theory advanced by Col. Jervis, and other military engineers, reiterated by the Hon. Jos. Howe in his much quoted speech at Ottawa; that the western peninsula of Canada (*i. e.* the Province of Ontario) is indefensible.

Next to urge upon our administrators the necessity for taking steps to increase the efficiency, and the strength, of our first Line of Defence.

In the pursuance of my first reason, I have followed few details, simply because the information afforded (if any) would be equally useful to enemy as friend, but by a slight sketch of the probable consequences of an invasion at different points; I have endeavoured to prove the fallacy of such an unqualified assertion, with the proviso that Lake Ontario should be held by our Navy.

To carry out this *sine qua non*. I would urge upon the Government the purchase of one or two suitable gun-boats. The U. S. Government already possess four Revenue cutters on Lakes Ontario and Erie, and two more are building at Buffalo. These vessels however insignificant in a naval point of view, are iron-clads compared to the vessels dignified by the name of gun-boats in our service, and would ensure, at the outset, naval supremacy on the lakes. The possession of a few gunboats built for the purpose, such as may be seen by the dozen at Portland or Plymouth would turn the scale the other way, and they might be bought cheaply enough from the imperial Government. By stationing them on the Fishing grounds, and at the depots of the various naval Brigades formed to man them, they might be made useful as schools for the education of our navy, and for the protection of the Fish-

eries, as I don't think they will be given up just now.

To condense the ideas I endeavoured to convey in the furtherance of my second reason, I would urge upon the Government to amend the existing Militia Laws in the following respects,

1st, By abolishing distinctions between the Volunteer and Active Militia Force, and rendering a certain period of service compulsory.

By imposing a special tax for Militia purposes, to be paid by those not actually serving in the Militia for the time being.

3rd. By creating from the passed service men of the Active Force, Battalions, and Divisions of Reserve, with their proper staff organizations.

4th. By popularizing the service by special immunities and grants.

These changes would allow:

1st. The organization of a 3 years drilled Militia.

2nd. Their retention for 3 years longer in an organised Reserve.

3rd. Their complete equipment in Artillery, service stores, and ammunition, to take the field as the first line of Defence, and the following increase of Departmental efficiency, viz:—

1st. A trained staff of each Brigade and Division.

2nd. Reserve stores in each District.

3rd. Organized Transport.

Without these changes I very much fear that the Invasion of Canada in 1874 would end less happily in reality than in my narrative.

It is useless to say more on a subject upon which so much has already been said, but with an earnest wish that such, or kindred measures may be adopted to increase the efficiency of our Canadian Militia.

I remain,

Yours, &c.

CENTURION.

To the Editor of the VOLUNTEER REVIEW.

SIR:—Can any person recruit for a Rural Battalion in a Town where there is a Town Battalion Head-Quarters? ENQUIRER.

Belleville, Ont., April 30th, 1872.

ANSWER.—There is no law to prevent recruiting in any district, it is not etiquette to do so however, but as the volunteer is free in his choice of corps it is merely a question of local personal influence.—Ed. Vol. Rev.

A WIMBLEDON FOR THE UNITED STATES.

Our American friends have never paid much attention to the subject of Rifle shooting. They have been surprised at the enthusiasm with which it is practised in Great Britain and Canada, and some leading journals speak of the apathy displayed on a subject of so much importance. A National Rifle Association has been formed, however, and a bill has been introduced into the New York Legislature in its behalf, granting ground for the purpose of practice, and authorising the Government of the State to offer prizes for competition amongst marksmen. The New York World says: "Wimbledon has long been a butt of English and American Humorists. But the complications arising out of the Alabama claims have made many Americans question whether England might not find her account in her Wimbledon. He laughs best who laughs last. The 150,000 English volunteers are trained marksmen. So are the 45,000 Canadian volunteers. But beyond the formation of the National Rifle Association nothing has been done towards fitting our militia to cope with them. Our militia can march well, some of them, and of course they are all heroes, but they cannot shoot straight. By all means let us have an American Wimbledon." This shows that the Americans are becoming alive to the importance of the subject. It is gratifying to know that satisfactory progress has been made in Canada in rifle shooting. The imperative order which obliges each volunteer to put in the required practice while performing his annual drill, is productive of good results. We do not expect that a marksman can be made in a few weeks, for it requires years of constant practice to become skilled in the use of the rifle—but the annual course of training must accustom the members of the volunteer force to rifle shooting, if it does not make all first class marksmen. We hope to see the spirit kept up, and that the number of marksmen will increase steadily every year. It is gratifying to find the Government disposed to encourage in every way the development of the shooting qualities of the volunteers. The money laid out in this way is well spent, and the result is such as justified the expenditure.