

re-organization hinted at in the commencement of the pamphlet; I may perhaps be allowed without attempting to criticise the scheme, (which if practicable would be a good one) to ask where the men are to be found, and how the time is to be obtained, for carrying his suggestions as to training into effect. Granted that a staff could be procured who would be willing, after 5 years' service, to retire into private life (their business or professions as civilians being necessarily dropped during that time) how would it be possible for regimental officers, on promotion to leave their occupations for three months at a time to attend a military school. The majority of the best officers in the Force are men actively engaged in the real business of life, and whose patriotism and military ardour leads them to make certain sacrifices in the performance of their military service. If these men, under Col. Fletcher's system, were to leave the force, from the impossibility of complying with its requirements, what class would take their places? None but those whose fortune sufficed them without engaging in labor, or the dillitant, idling, men about town, who would be glad of three months' subsistence from any source; and who, after their training, would be of like service to the country, and no credit to the Force. A few good men, laboring under an acute attack of *scarlet fever*, might be persuaded to join at first; but the decadence of our military schools, as at present constituted, shew little encouragement to the adoption of such a scheme.

The same argument applies to the men of the proposed force. It would be impossible to find the requisite number of men for such service, unless, as in the case of the Dominion Artillery, recourse were had to discharged soldiers, who on leaving the service have found they were fitted for no other occupation; or emigrants who are desirous of looking about them for a year, before entering upon active employment. It is a fallacy to expect that firm laborers or farmers' sons, who constitute a large proportion of rural battalions, or apprentices, journeymen, or clerks, who constitute the city battalions, could leave their employments for a year; or that they would sacrifice wages at the rate of \$1.00 to \$2.50 per day, to serve as soldiers for 50 or 60 cents per day. These men are willing to sacrifice their wages in cases of emergency; and (for a year or two perhaps) for the sake of attending the annual drill, but it will be apparent to all, that such a scheme could not induce the best, or even desirable, men to leave their employments for a whole year; and that, consequently, the ranks would be filled with *near-do-weel's* and scapgraces, with a small sprinkling of enthusiasts.

I will not dwell upon this matter, as I feel sure that Colonel Fletcher has not calculated upon the difficulty in the arrangement of his scheme. If he had advocated the establishment of such a force upon permanent

footing, thereby giving officers and men a future to look forward to; with, perhaps, some provision as to discharges before the expiration of service, the establishment of such schools as he proposes would not be without the bounds of possibility; although his researches upon the Militia System have not led him to the radical errors which now affect its workings. For some of these, I would refer him to Lieutenant Col. Davis' pamphlet. The frightful features there depicted of the disorganization and demoralization of the Volunteer Force, might lead him to suppose that the officer commanding the 37th was of a slightly imaginative turn of mind; but, nevertheless, that grievances do exist, is a fact patent to every officer in the Force. But it is not from such exaggerated or impossible narratives that the Force can expect redress, and no one who had seen the trim and soldierlike appearance of the 37th in 1868, would believe that it could now form the type for such a doleful picture. It is a matter for regret that the zeal of the writer should have led him to colour his sketches so highly, even for the sake of the radiness and originality which it undoubtedly possesses. But I am forced to treat his pamphlet in a graver manner. Going forth to the world, under his signature; bearing the weight of his official position as an officer of the highest rank possible in the Militia Force, I do not hesitate to assert that it is highly injurious and detrimental to the interests of the Force, and is calculated to give a wrong impression as to the discipline and morale of the organization. From an intimate acquaintance with the Force for the past eight years, I can say with perfect truth, that never on any one occasion have I realised the absurdities he has depicted, nor have I known of such utter want of discipline or military usage in any battalion. Should Lt. Col. Davis be able to support his case by illustrations, I can only feel that it can be no object to the country to retain such officers and men, and the wisest course to be adopted would be for the Government to dispense with their services.

I do not find fault with the pamphlet, because having a lively sense of the imperfections of constitution and management of the Volunteer Force the writer has put his case in forcible language, and employed overdrawn illustrations; but I do sincerely regret, that, as an officer commanding a Regiment of Canadian Volunteer Militia, he should have published to the world a statement abounding with inaccuracies and exaggerations as depicting "The Canadian Militia, its organization and present condition." As a Canadian Militiaman I deny its applicability to the Force, and deprecate the adoption of individual instances as any criterion of the condition as a whole. I also submit that the publication of wild statements such as abound through the pamphlet, are likely to have an injurious effect, by withdrawing the attention of the Militia authorities from vital defects.

In thus assuming the office of critic, I beg the forbearance of the officers I have referred to, as I enter upon the task with reluctance, and solely in the interests, and for the sake of, the cause I have at heart. With such feelings, it is most gratifying to me, to see that an officer of Colonel Fletcher's rank and experience, should take so great an interest in our militia affairs: and I accept his "memorandum" as a guarantee, that, through his means, the subject will not be lost sight of at Headquarters. To have a friend at court is no small gain to the Militia Force, who have been long apt to be disregarded as an unnecessary encumbrance to the civil power. I feel sure that, on farther investigation, he will be led to the same conclusion that all who have studied the subject are forced to arrive:—that the Volunteer system, as at present constituted, is inadequate for the requirements of the country, and that radical changes are necessary before any satisfactory result can be attained. What these changes are, and how they should be effected, should form a subject of inquiry by the Government, and it would be an act of courtesy which would be appreciated by the Force, if a number of prominent officers of the Force were nominated by Government to take into consideration the present condition of the Force, and to frame such amendments to the act as might be considered necessary for its re-organization upon a proper basis, with such suggestions for its regulation and interior economy as might approve themselves, from their knowledge of its requirements upon such basis. I have no doubt that the Militia Force of the country would again be a subject of pride and credit, and no longer liable to be stigmatized as inefficient and useless. For some such desirable commendation I, & many comrades, are now looking; trusting that with the change of government many of the old traditions of the Department of Militia and Defence may be swept away, and that under the new regime, discipline and efficiency may once more prevail as the characteristics of the Canadian Militia.

CENTURIAN.

BROME VOLUNTEER CAVALRY, P. Q.

A presentation was made a short time since by the Non Commissioned Officers and Troopers of the Brome Troop of Volunteer Cavalry to their Commanding Officer Captain S. N. Boright. The testimonial consisted of an imported Regulation Sabre, Sword Belt—Sabretasche and Slings, as also a regulation Pouch and Belt.

Captain Boright is deservedly very popular amongst his men, and takes great interest in the welfare of his Troops.—*Communicated.*

The Duke of Edinburgh has arrived at St Petersburg.

Famine is reported in Russia.