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THE NUMERICAL STATE OF THE MILITIA.

To the Editor of the VOLUNTEER REVIEW.

11th March, 1874.

DEAR SIR—In the Vol. R. of 3rd inst. appear three excellent letters, one bearing the well-known signature ("Sabreur") of a correspondent whose communications are always fraught with the truest soldierly spirit; the second that of "Gladiator"; the third that of "Imperial Officer."

"Sabreur" introduces the principle, originated, I believe, editorially in the VOLUNTEER REVIEW, of throwing the onus of providing militia quotas on "municipal responsibility."

"Gladiator" justly insists on the inadequacy of the pay accorded to the Force.

"Imperial Officer" adverts in terms of merited commendation of "many municipalities in Ontario" which have voluntarily approached the realization of the editorial idea by votes of extra pay.

The liberality of such municipal councils is worthy of all praise. But there is reason to doubt the probability of so generous an example coming to be universally followed, and I fear it would be to be apprehended that the attempt to throw compulsory military responsibility on these bodies would be productive of grave discontent by reason, partly, of the "disgraceful obstructiveness" which "Sabreur" stigmatizes.

The writer of the article "Our Militia," in the *Canadian Monthly* for March, considers the two commonly urged remedies for the present unsatisfactory numerical state of the militia, viz:—"Compulsory Enlistment by Ballot," and "Greatly Increased Pay." Against the first of these he considers the arguments "to be almost unanswerable." I do not myself think that even all those which he adduces are so, but it is not my purpose here to enter on any attempt at refutation.

"With regard to the second," says "Miles," "it is, I think, hardly to be expected in the present economical age that the Government will enter into competition with the labour market, and thereby enormously increase the militia estimates; yet, if the present system be continued, and full musters are expected, some additional inducement in the shape of pay must, I fear, be held out." The italics are not in the original.

It would seem doubtful whether any, even the most clever or the most ardent of Canadian soldiers who have devoted thought to the subject, have been able to arrive at more definite conclusions than such as are expressed in the above article and letters.

Considering the subject from "a numerical point of view only" the words "if the present system be continued, and full musters are expected," are suggestive of some ideas which might possibly, in some slight degree, tend to smooth the way towards an elucidation of the problem.

Without going into any present advocacy of the ballot, let us suppose, for the sake of illustration, that it were in operation. It might then be assumed that the only system on which it could be fairly enforced would be in a strict ratio to population.

The population of the Dominion in 1871, as well as the actual recent musters of the militia, point to the proportion of one per cent. as the present reasonable limit of demand on the industrial energies of the people for militia purposes. This would give in round numbers 36,000 men, a number not very much in excess of late musters.

It is not, perhaps, advancing too much to affirm that conditions of excitement and national indignation, which give so strong and so beneficial an impetus to the creation of a national force, are false conditions, on which to base it for a performance.

Every district on the spur of such feelings as animate men's minds in the presence of an outrageous invasion of their soil, would contribute a contingent much in excess of what could be fairly required of it in the absence of such an incentive, or, still more, in the absence of any visible probability of such an incentive.

If this be conceded it will be apparent that from 1862, the time of the "TrentaFair," till the close of the year 1866, during which period the Dominion Force assumed its present definite form, was a period highly favorable, indeed, to the development of a martial spirit, but, for that reason, involving false data for the basis of a force intended to be permanent during the time of profound peace.

The palpable decadence of the Force during the year 1867 probably bears out this view, and its present condition seems to afford additional corroboration.

It is likely, therefore that many districts had assigned to them during the period of excitement, a force in excess of what they can conveniently maintain in times of mere dull routine.

I do not question the expediency of accepting the volunteered services of a contingent in excess of the populational quota where there remains, after the moment of excitement has passed, evidence of a military spirit enduring enough to survive.

But I think there are instances in which a transitory zeal has led to the establishment of corps beyond the energies of a district to sustain in time of peace, and I think there are also districts in which a reduction in the establishments of Battalions would be welcomed as a relief by Commanding and other officers, who necessarily abhor the sham involved in the continual recurrence of mus-

ters below the authorized and required standard.

Permit me to illustrate the point by one or two examples.

The county of Durham has, since 1866, with commendable spirit, supported two battalions, comprising fourteen companies, whose combined strength should be therefore 770 men. I am aware that one or two companies (I do not know precisely how many) of the 45th belong to Victoria. But of that presently. The strength of these two Regiments at Peterboro' in 1873, I find stated, doubtless correctly, by a correspondent of the VOLUNTEER REVIEW, as follows:—The 46th, 320; the 45th, 150; total 470.

Turning to the Census Returns we find the actual population of the county of Durham to be, in round numbers, 37,000. We are, therefore, *prima facie*, led to the conclusion that she is over-taxed, and ought not to be called upon to contribute to the national forces more than 370 men, to which the muster she actually sent into camp in 1873 is an approximation, but in excess of her proportion, if we take into consideration her cavalry and artillery on the one hand, and on the other, make allowance for two or three companies of the 45th belonging to Victoria.

But this is not all. It is probable that no two Regiments in the service have been more indebted to the deserved personal popularity and soldierly qualities of their commanding and Field officers, and doubtless these are well supported.

Let us further give consideration to the fact that, but for the hap-hazard manner in which matters were bungled in June 1866, out of which arose the conflicting claims of Col. Cubitt and Col. Williams, there would never have been two Battalions in Durham.

On this principle the county of Victoria, having a population of, say, 32,000, ought, instead of merely contributing two or three companies to a Regiment of another county, itself to furnish a Battalion of 320 men.

Let us now take the adjacent county of Northumberland, which, with a population of 40,000 maintains a Regiment of the nominal strength of 495 men. Northumberland is therefore overtaxed by 95 men, in her infantry alone.

As a matter of fact (if the source above quoted be reliable) the 40th turned out, in 1873, 350 strong. If we take her cavalry into account, Northumberland will, including this actual muster of infantry have furnished last year probably a little above her proportion.

If the proposition of one per cent of the population, except in the case of cities and large towns be, as I believe it to be, the full extent to which the country will stand the drain in time of peace; and if it be conceded that continued musters far below nominal strength are mischievous as partaking of the nature of a sham; might it not be well to consider the expediency of reducing esta-