



# The Volunteer Review

## AND MILITARY AND NAVAL GAZETTE.

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### CORRESPONDENCE.

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

To the Editor of the VOLUNTEER REVIEW,

Sir:—Having sent in my resignation and recommended a successor I wish to make a few remarks on the prospects of the reorganization of the 18th Battalion.

You are aware that the majority of the people about here are agriculturists, and as the cost of farm labour has risen at least 50 per cent. within the last few years, it follows that when a young farmer is out for his sixteen days annual drill (which may happen at a time most inconvenient for his leaving home) he is obliged to supply his place by one or perhaps two men (if so fortunate as to get them) at a cost of 4s. or 5s. and board each per day, while he only gets 2s. 6d. from the Government.

I believe no section in the Dominion has furnished more volunteers in proportion to population than this has done, and as most of the young men have been connected with the 18th since its formation, they feel the increased number of days to drill coupled with the long distance they have to go to camp, a tax and inconvenience which is not easily borne, and which 50cts. per day does not half cover.

"There is no better security for peace than strength to resist attack," and as the volunteer force is the only one we have to depend upon at present, and as it has already proved itself of the greatest possible advantage to this country; I think, if it is to be continued that the Government should take into serious consideration the great inconvenience and loss the volunteers are put to in going out for sixteen days drill, during the summer season, and hold out the inducement of at least five shillings per day while they are on duty in connection with the camps. This increase of pay falls equally on the volunteers as on the rest of the community and those who are not volunteers may well afford to bear their share of the cost of keeping up the force.

It is impossible yet to say if the 18th will reorganize, but I think they will, nor would

I say that an increase of pay even to 5s. per day would be an inducement to them, but this I will say that should the Government require their services to repel invasion they will spring forward to a man in defence of the country.

Craving your indulgence for having written so long a letter on a subject which must be perfectly familiar to you.

I remain,

Yours truly,

WM. HIGGINSON,

Lt.-Col. 18th Battalion.

Vankloek Hill, 8th March, 1872.

To the Editor of the VOLUNTEER REVIEW.

Sir:—As the period for the annual drill approaches Captains of Companies naturally ask themselves what means am I to take to insure my Company making a respectable appearance in point of numbers at the coming muster.

I think it is an established fact that unsolicited voluntary enlistment is of very rare occurrence indeed, consequently officers commanding Companies have to spend a great deal of time to coax and persuade, and put themselves under all sorts of compliments to a sufficient number of their fellow citizens, to maintain the efficiency of the corps whose existence involves their credit as officers, often I grant this arduous task is shared by the subalterns, but not as a general rule. It is indeed an arduous and thankless task and how few of those who make loud professions of patriotism in public are willing to make the necessary private sacrifices our military duty requires, and how ready these same parties (who I regret to say at present are in the majority) are to discourage and taunt those who are disposed to qualify themselves to be useful to their country in time of need.

It is expedient for the welfare of our country that a considerable number of our people should be trained in the art of organized defence, then is it anything but reasonable to provide that the burden of such organization should be distributed over the whole population. Without underrating the duties and responsibilities of our staff officers, I think I am justified in saying that

under the present system by far the greatest amount of the burden of keeping up our Militia organization falls to the lot of officers commanding companies, and I ask in all justice is it fair or reasonable that this burden should rest upon only six or eight men in each city or county.

As to the difficulties in obtaining recruits I think, the evil lies in their being too many discouragements, and not sufficient inducements in our enrolment which does not work with justice to all classes and does not I think carry out the intention of our Militia act, was it not the intention of that act that a certain number should be drilled for three years, and then make way for another lot who should go through the course in like manner? But I will venture to state that more than three fourths of the men who attended last year's drill have been in the force five or six years, perhaps longer, and that it is impossible to recruit new material to any considerable extent.

As a basis for a remedy I would suggest that those who would come forward and endeavour to acquire a military knowledge by joining the force for a term of years should be liberally compensated for their loss of time at the expense of those who will not make such sacrifices, we then I think would have a sufficient number of men, and be able to have some drill at Company headquarters which is now nearly done away with.

I think for the good of the force some change should be promptly decided upon. I am confident many officers will acknowledge that the creditable appearance of their companies at the annual drill is due to extra exertion in inducing a good number of the old members to "try it once more for the sake of keeping up the good name of the company," this I must protest is not as it should be.

As I have only been a constant reader of your admirable paper for a limited period, if I have touched upon ground previously treated of by any of your numerous correspondents, I trust the above explanation will acquit me for trespassing.

Yours truly, H.

March 18th, 1872.