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Comment and Criticism.

WE might have, and ought to have, fortified our arguments last week in favor of extra consideration for the officers of the permanent corps by quoting the opinion of the Major-General commanding upon the same point; however, it is not yet too late to do so. In his annual report to the Minister of Militia at the end of 1885, Sir Fred. Middleton remarks: "As the regulations now stand, an officer of the permanent force who has made soldiering his profession, giving up all other work and devoting himself to his duties, finds himself, on active service, or when called out in aid of the civil power, under the command of an officer of the militia force of the same rank, who has, perhaps, very little professional knowledge. Now, this, I think, ought not to be, for many reasons, and I therefore recommend that all officers of the permanent militia force shall rank senior to other militia officers of their own rank, in accordance with Imperial regulations on that point." One would think that the case was so plain as not to require much stating in order to insure remedial action.

ANOTHER change advocated in the same report it seems opportune to discuss now. The general says, just before ending his report: "I would wish to draw attention to the present system of paying certain sums for the instruction and drill of the regiments and companies, which seems to me to be open to objection, and I should recommend its being

reconsidered and altered, with a view to adding to the efficiency of the service. One arrangement appears to me very desirable, and that is that city regiments should have paid adjutants. These appointments to be for five years, subject to extension at the will of the minister. These adjutants would also act as musketry instructors." The general is not alone in this advocacy of the employment of paid adjutants for the city corps, for we know that many of the city commanding officers are anxious to see the change made.

THEY argue that in every city corps, where there is work of one kind or another to be done from one end of the year to the other, it is necessary that there should be an officer always with time at his disposal to do it, and to attend to any business of a regimental nature that may casually arise. This work at present has to be done in most cases by the commanding officer, which answers very well so long as the commanding officer happens to have plenty of time and leisure at his disposal, but in case he should be a professional or business man it stands to reason he could not devote the time to every detail of regimental work which is absolutely necessary in order to keep his corps in that state of efficiency in which he would wish to see it. A paid adjutant, on the other hand, could devote his whole time to his corps, as well as to the work of paymaster, which is now usually done by the commanding officer, and would always have this officer to consult with on regimental affairs. He could also, as the general suggests, look after the musketry instruction of the corps, and if necessary, supervise the quartermaster's stores and armory. In short, there is no end to the directions in which he could be advantageously utilized.

THERE seems too to be a good supply of excellent material ready to our hands for the position of paid adjutants in the form of graduates of the Royal Military College, who have received thorough military educations partly at the expense of the country, and who now find difficulty in finding employments in which their military education would be of use to them. If these young men were offered commissions as lieutenants, with some prospect of promotion after a reasonable length of satisfactory service, probably sufficient of them to meet all requirements would prefer the appointment to an Imperial commission.

NOW, as regards expense, this would not be so formidable an obstacle as appears at first sight, for in the first place the allowances now made for drill instruction could be diverted towards the pay of the adjutants, and many little items of expense, which are inseparable from the present system, would be obviated by having an officer always on duty. Moreover the adjutants would so greatly relieve the present strain on commanding officers that we doubt not these would gladly contribute in a slight degree to the cost of their maintenance. But if greater efficiency could be attained by having paid adjutants and musketry instructors, surely the country could afford the somewhat increased expenditure that would be involved. This whole matter is well worthy of serious consideration, and we should be glad to see parties interested discuss it at length in these columns.