

THE BRITISH PARLIAMENT AND THE VOLUNTEERS.

The end of the parliamentary session is a yearly event which naturally sets all portions of the English public politic upon the business commonly known as stock taking. Some work has generally been done for all the great and little institutions of the nation, and a great deal more left undone.—No year passes, one may say, in which the Church, the Army and the Navy, the Civil Service, the Law, the City, the great world of trade and industry, have not been more or less affected, either by their own seeking or against their will, from within or without, by some or more of the statutes which pass into law before the prorogation of Parliament. And so with all the smaller limbs of the body politic. It is the natural time, therefore, for a journal which has the honor to represent any portion of the nation to consider how that portion stands with reference to the work of the past session. In our own case, the case is an easy one. From the date of its resuscitation, eight years ago, the Volunteer force, has, for the most part stood and thriven by its own innate vigor. We have given our Legislature, probably, less trouble, and cost the nation less in money and anxiety, than any English organization recorded in our history of anything like the same magnitude and importance. We are told, in the first instance, that the old Act which sufficed for our grandfathers, was good enough law for us, and would answer all our purposes. We made no demur, but, like honest folk bent on getting our work done with as little fuss as might be, accepted the position, believing our advisers, and starting in the faith that the Act of George III., or, indeed, any other Act would prove workable by those who really meant work. And so, indeed, it proved. The joints and springs were a little rusty, perhaps, and creaked unpleasantly on being set in motion; but, on the whole, we did not find the machine unworkable, while using it we were able to find out its defects, and to see what improvements were wanted to meet the times. These were in due course provided by Lord de Grey's Act, which, with the exception of that introduced by the present Solicitor-General, giving certain facilities—by far too few, as it has turned—for the acquisition of rifle ranges, is the only Act of Parliament which the great Volunteer movement of 1859-60 has placed on our Statute-book. Of course, this singular abstinence from legislation is in great measure owing to the fact that Volunteer matters are, for the most part, transacted and settled by warrants or regulations of the department to which the force belongs. As forming part of the military force of the country, such pecuniary provision as is made for us comes into the ordinary Budget, and for other than financial matters ample power has wisely been

left to the authorities at the War-office, for the time being to provide such guidance and help as might be required from time to time. And so we have jogged on, and, on the whole, contentedly, and in a form sufficiently satisfactory to ourselves and the country. Nevertheless, we, too, like other British institutions, have our own grievances for which we desire from Parliament or Government some remedy, more or less urgently. We have, also, moot questions as to the meaning and principle of our existence, the details of our organization, the possibilities of our future, upon which we are in search of enlightened counsel wherever it may be found, and upon which, therefore, we not unreasonably desire to see the attention of the collective wisdom of the nation fixed, and to hear what they have to say to us.

In both directions the last session has not been by any means a blank for us.—Volunteer matters have occupied their share of public attention, notwithstanding the Reform debates, and if such grievances as we had last autumn are all unabated, we have, at least, now more definite ideas as to our meaning and functions. When we speak of grievances we are, perhaps, using too strong a word. Impecuniosity of a disagreeable, but not dangerous nature may be said to sum them up. We complain that, upon the allowance voted us by Parliament, we can't make both ends meet, and what we do get is made less useful than it might be by useless and irritating restrictions as to the purposes for which it may be used, and by the method in which it is doled out. Representations on both these subjects were made by our officers, before the session commenced, to the Government, and they have been considered more or less by the House. The results have been, we presume, to think, not otherwise than satisfactory.—It is true that the Government grant remains still at its old figure, but, from what has taken place, we have fair grounds for hoping that the case will be seriously considered in the next Budget, with restrictions on the application of what is given we have gained all that can be desired, if official speech has any meaning. In future we believe the grant is to be paid over to the commanding officers and finance committees of corps, they (of course with certain limits) being allowed to apply it as they please for corps purposes, the adjutants being relieved from all responsibility in the matter of finance, and, we hope (but this is as yet not too clear), the system of double vouchers, whereby the War-office manage to employ a large staff of clerks, as uselessly as possible to the public, being swept away, or at least largely modified. With respect to our theoretical difficulties, the case has been even more satisfactory. When Parliament met we were in a state of unpleasant doubt and bewilderment. The Chester affair had revived all the old ques-

tions as to our duties as Volunteers in cases of civil tumult. The session has, happily cleared all doubt away for the future. Mr. Walpole's ambiguous answers and Sir John Pakington's notorious resolutions have had the happy effect of forcing us to come to a distinct understanding upon the point, and, on the whole, nothing could be more satisfactory than the three debates and the results of them, to which we need do no more than allude, having had occasion to consider in detail the withdrawal of the obnoxious resolutions. Of course the great question raised by Lord Elcho on the militia debate remains unanswered, but such a proposal must have time to sink into the mind of John Bull before any fair consideration will be given to it. On the whole, then, we may congratulate our readers on the result of the great session of 1867 so far as the Volunteers are concerned.—*United Service Gazette*.

MAJOR C. G. LEVESCONTE.

We regret exceedingly to record the death, from a slow fever on Sunday morning the 1st inst., of one of our oldest and most esteemed citizens, Major CHARLES GEORGE LEVESCONTE, in the 49th years of his age, who has for so many years, occupied a prominent position in the affairs of the Town and County, both in a public and private capacity. As a member of the Town Council, his loss will be severely felt; as a genial kind hearted man, a friend to the poor, and to all with whom he had intimate dealings, his place will not soon be supplied. In his military capacity he organized and fostered the first Volunteer Company of Rifles in the County, and with them, although lamed by a gun shot wound, spent a part of two seasons on the frontier. His funeral was the largest and most respectable that has ever taken place in the County, thus showing the estimation in which he was held, while all the streets through which the cortege passed, and the graveyard, were densely packed with women and children, with nine-tenths of whom he was personally acquainted. A firing of Rifles, Grand Trunk and the Company lately under his command, preceded the coffin: then followed the Band of the Moira Fire Company: the Hears; his horse properly caparisoned; 15th Battalion; Trenton Artillery detachment; officers of 15th and 49th Battalions; Moira Fire Company; Town Councillors; Citizens, &c., numbering over 600. He was buried in the Church of England burying ground, and the volleys of his friends and companions in arms closed the scene.—*Hastings Chronicle*.

GIBRALTAR.—The resident population of Gibraltar, according to the last census taken, amounted to 15,402, exclusive of the military, the convicts and aliens on temporary permits.