

Militia Report.

The "Annual Report of the State of the Militia," just laid before Parliament is of extreme interest to the country at large as well as to the force. The Lieut. General Commanding S. R. E. Selby Smyth, K. C. M. G., entering more fully into the subject than in previous years. That officer's report alone, occupies 63 pages of the Blue Book and treats of every branch of the service—Cavalry, Artillery, Engineers, Infantry, Royal Military College, etc. Showing such a thorough knowledge of the Militia and all matters connected with it, as is not easily acquired. It is to be regretted that he is soon to take his departure from among us, and that his valuable services should be lost to Canada.

He commences his report by pointing out the fact that the militia has, during the past few years, been reduced from an effective total of 43,000 men by reductions in the militia vote, until last year only 19,780 men could be called out and these for only 12 days, a period it will be readily admitted is too short for much good result." His remarks on the necessity for elementary instruction are of frequent occurrence which shows how much he feels the great want there exists for this very important matter being attended to. There is no "royal road to learning," drill, discipline and military duty, any more than there is to learning anything else—a military uniform will not make a soldier.

The city corps of Quebec are commended for their services during the riot last year, a subject which calls forth the following remarks:

"I must repeat, I think it unfair, and expecting too much self-education, to call out militia who are denizens of the same city with those whom they may have to subdue, some perhaps friends, even relations and near of kin, and to require them to enter into the collision, with possibly some loss of life on both sides. The militia respond, and will do so again and again, but when loss of life occurs through their being called upon to act, what must they expect among the roughs of that city when pursuing their vocations in civil life? Therefore, I am sure every thinking person will agree that, besides the two Battery Schools, a stronger force of embodied troops should be at hand in case of a repetition of disturbances in any of the large cities. But it is difficult to keep the necessity for military preparation before the eyes of a free and peaceful population, bent on energetically developing the vast resources that surround them, as it is to preserve them from rust and from the deterioration of prolonged peace the military institutions themselves."

The institution of drill companies in colleges and schools, the conception of which we learn from the report was due to Lt.-Col. the Hon. L. R. Masson, late Minister of Militia, is treated fit on a broad stand point, and the beneficial results which must accrue brought to notice. He says:

"There can be no doubt that drill calls into exercise much of the powers of the human being, and hence, when judiciously applied exercises actually promotes the health and physical growth of the frame. The School Board of London has for years past acknowledged its value, and has included it among the duties to be performed by their teachers. It is quite to them that over much of London, and under great difficulties, they have been earnest and persevering in endeavoring to provide for the physical culture of youth. In giving them habits of obedience to command, precision of movement and many, erect carriage of body, they have done that which leads to self-respect, and improves a whole community. Such may be likewise, and probably will be, the result of the system now in its infancy in Canada. When this has been some years in use in all the chief collegiate establishments as a recreative means of promoting sound health and correct deportment, it may, though it never ought to be, deprecated by peaceful disbelievers in all military requirements, because it will surely be conducive to the growth and sustentation of the military spirit of the youth of Canada."

The opening in January of military schools, for instruction of officers in infantry drill, at Toronto, Montreal and St. John, N. B., as also the addition of 9 Sergeants to the Schools of Gunnery, for the purpose of assisting in these schools, (G. O. says, they were appointed for the purpose of drilling the companies organized in educational establishments,) is next taken up—and in this connection the following paragraphs are worthy of the most serious attention, and we hope the suggestions contained in them will not be lost sight of by the Government during the present session of Parliament.

"But it would be a mistake to suppose that a technical education, and more moral, than the foregoing can provide are not required for even the ordinary drill, general management and interior economy of companies and battalions. For cavalry, artillery

and engineers, particularly the two latter, special scientific attainments cannot be dispensed with. I therefore revert to the larger provision for instruction of regimental officers and sergeants of cavalry and infantry after the principle of or engrained upon the two gunnery schools, which provide for artillery and somewhat for engineers. So long as Imperial regiments were in Canada they formed a basis and model providing means for instruction. Since they went the study of books has been the chief instruction; and theory without practice does not provide the root from which the branches must spread and fructify. Schools should therefore be provided for drill and discipline in cavalry and infantry tactics. In interior economy of regiments, and in the management and command of armed men. I have referred to these in some detail in previous reports, and I venture again to repeat the mode upon which these permanent schools can apparently be best put in operation. They would afford an elevated standard of primary military education and practical instruction, with conditions of regularity, precision, discipline and respect for authority which are necessary for those who have to instruct and command obedience from others. They would give strength and solidity to the active force, and would secure confidence in the stability of the institutions of the country, providing a guarantee that the military force is in a condition to maintain law and order.

"Does not the proper organization of a military force, including training for its officers and non-commissioned officers, devolve on a country as much as the means of administering the laws which are carried out under its protection? Should it not, therefore, follow that steps should be taken to provide for the efficiency of the military establishment, by supplying the want which the withdrawal of the regular troops has created? This want, every year, is being more and more felt, and I have often pressed that a remedy might be applied. As yet, some officers who have received instruction in the schools formed in connection with the regular regiments, and non-commissioned officers, who are old soldiers, are still available to instruct recruits in the rudiments of drill. These conditions are, however, rapidly changing. We have now no such schools, and, except the 'A' and 'B' Batteries, there is no body of men with professional training to ensure the advance of discipline and military science, and to profit by trained experience. Without some professionally trained force, the standard of efficiency will gradually become lower, and the form of military service will be maintained, while the spirit, though far from dead, will be crude and uneducated.

"Canada should have men whose business it is to study the art of war as professionals, and not merely as amateurs. The very best irregular troops are only formidable when properly drilled and disciplined, and for this there is great need of the indispensable element of trained and experienced officers and non-commissioned staff. When troops are but partially trained, the only hope is from individual intelligence and strict discipline on the part of the commanders and their subordinates. It is preparation on that ensures success when the unlooked-for day of trial suddenly arrives, and therefore a perfect organization, with skill and efficiency in every branch, with superior discipline, are necessary. But to compass this, permanent bodies of men, even if of small numbers, are indispensable. I have often suggested, as strongly as I could venture, the establishment of three training schools for cavalry and infantry on a similar basis to 'A' and 'B' Batteries, which have proved so useful for artillery. These schools would serve besides, as standards of comparison for the rest of the country, viz.: the Active and Reserve militia. Canadian officers can be found who have been disciplined by 'A' and 'B' Batteries, or some of the officers of those Batteries, fairly qualified to command these schools. The appointments should be for a limited term, with the power of renewal, conditional on the officers keeping themselves acquainted and conversant with the changes and improvements in the art of war, either by visiting Europe or otherwise. There should be a doctor and quartermaster for the three officers of subordinate rank who have evinced good capacity, are willing to embrace the military profession as a career, and would receive commissions to act as cavalry and infantry instructors in the schools. To these schools all gentlemen recommended for commissions in the militia would be required to come, for three months at least on first appointment, when their certificates would depend on the ability they displayed. Before promotion, officers should be required to attend for three months, passing through a course of training, and required to obtain a qualifying certificate. For non-commissioned officers and rank and file, men should be enlisted for three years, with inducement, in case of efficiency to re-engage. From these the non-commissioned staff of pay-sergeants and drill instructors would be selected, but all would learn those duties though serving as private soldiers, and would on discharge be valuable as instructors in the militia generally.

"It is an axiom that in all men it is necessary to learn to obey before being qualified to command, and these schools would fulfil these objects.

"My previous suggestions were to form three separate schools, composed of about one hundred men each, and to station them at Toronto for Western Canada, and because there is a good barrack there; at St. John's, P. Q., because it is an important strategic point in advance of Montreal, and because there is a good barrack there; at Quebec, because that city requires an additional drilled force, and because there is a barrack there.

"The calculation I published last year for only eighty men and three officers per company amounted to the cost annually of about one hundred and thirteen thousand dollars for the three schools. The estimates will be found in detail in last year's report.

"Should it not be convenient to establish these three separate schools immediately, I suggest the perhaps preferable alternative of increasing 'A' and 'B' Batteries at first by three officers and 100 men each for cavalry and infantry, thus constituting them brigade schools for the three arms under the present commandants.

"I suggest that the artillery artificers whom I have already submitted to be absolutely necessary for keeping the fortifications of Quebec and Kingston in repair should be included in the 100 men, say 25 for each battery, leaving a balance of 75 men for each training school, independent of the students for 'short' and 'long' courses.

"It may be surmised that 50 men in each would be sufficient for the latter purpose, and so they would in some measure, and *faud d'ailleurs*; but when we deduct non-commissioned officers and men going on and coming off daily guard with two sentries, always re-