

ly on the country, it must fall on all. The existing law is pronounced on the whole good, and all that is asked is that its provisions be intelligently and fearlessly carried out. If this be not done, Lieut.-Colonel McKenzie thinks the end of the present active force is not far off.—Orillia Packet, April 24.

ANNUAL REPORT ON THE STATE OF THE MILITIA FOR 1873.

The Honorable

The Minister of Militia and Defence, &c.

Sir,—The money estimates being voted by Parliament for the fiscal year ending 30th June, and the force having been permitted to perform the drill during the current financial year at times most convenient, has militated against the efficiency of the militia service and the drill and training of the militia in a satisfactory manner.

The season most suitable for drill in camp commences about the 10th June, and ends in September. The time most suitable for a majority of the force is from the 10th June to 20th July.

The fiscal year, however, divides this period into two, and renders it impossible to furnish any report as to the numbers of men who have drilled during such year, unless made up to the end of June; but as Parliament usually meets in February or March, such a report on the state of the militia, being at least eight months in arrear, would not give requisite information.

I have therefore obtained from the Deputy Adjutants General of Districts, reports relating to that portion of the drill for the fiscal year 1873-74 completed since 1st July, 1873, and append the same for your information. The returns relating to the enrolment of the Reserve Militia for 1873 are also appended.

By these reports it appears that the following numbers of officers, non-commissioned officers and men of the Active Militia have performed the annual drill for 1873-74:—

Military District No. 1.....	2,088
" 2.....	2,852
" 3.....	2,877
" 4.....	768
" 5.....	2,897
" 6.....	377
" 7.....	2,066
" 8.....	2,444
" 9.....	3,594

Total..... 19,963

The remaining corps will complete the drills during the winter at their several drill sheds, or in battalion camps, prior to the 30th June, 1874.

The General Orders relating to the drill and training of the current year, provide for the drill of companies for sixteen days at company headquarters, on the understanding that the men will be subsisted and lodged at their homes during the days appointed for drill, or by battalions in eight day camps, as may be found most suitable.

The reports presented herewith will show the mode adopted by corps in the respective districts. Regarding the country companies, there seems a difficulty in their carrying on the drills in a satisfactory manner, except in cases where the periods of drill are continuous, and arrangements are made for subsistence at the place appointed for drill. The reasons are obvious—the men, as a general rule, reside at distances varying

from one to eight miles from the company headquarters, which renders the daily journey to and from the drill a serious obstacle. It is therefore apparent that, as regards many of the country companies, the plan has not worked well. For drill by battalions the case is different—the men have only one journey to make coming and going, and they are subsisted and lodged on the spot; besides this, the drills performed where a number of companies are brought together creates an emulation which cannot be otherwise obtained.

Owing to the great extent of country, the diversified interests of the inhabitants, affected by climate and occupation, it is not easy to frame any regulation which will bear equally on all. In the west the weather is milder, with less snow in winter, and the spring work commences earlier; in the east, more particularly along the River St. Lawrence and the Atlantic coast, the commercial and shipping interests must be consulted.

These difficulties are exemplified more particularly in the cities in respect to drill. For instance, in London, Hamilton, and Toronto the force usually turns out for 15 days' continuous drill in camp with readiness and apparent ease; coming eastward, Kingston and Ottawa are less ready, but could send their corps into camp reduced in strength. In Montreal, Quebec, St. John and Halifax, the shipping and other interests seem to place a barrier in the way of taking the men from their homes for drill in camps, and a preference is shown for drill on different days during the year, as circumstances may permit.

There are reasons, no doubt, why the system of voluntary service bears more heavily upon some portions of the country than upon others. The most important is, that in the newly settled districts, the first organization of a volunteer company absorbs the whole of the volunteer element for the time being within a radius of miles from the company headquarters, so that when the period of three years for which these men have volunteered to serve, expires, other men cannot be found within a convenient distance, who will volunteer to fill vacancies. The consequence is, that in order to maintain these company organizations, many old volunteers continue to serve in the ranks for even four five or six years.

In these thinly settled districts there will always be a difficulty in keeping up a continuous company organization by voluntary enrolment. There would, however, be no such difficulty if company headquarters were changed from place to place, as the period of service of each set of men expired; but then the distance from the places of residence of the present officers to the new headquarters would be such an obstacle as to prevent many from taking that active personal interest in the company indispensable to secure efficiency, and would result in an absolute necessity for cancelling commissions and the appointment of other officers who would qualify themselves and undertake the duty.

Under existing regulations, if the old officers had served the necessary period of five years in the militia, three of which have been as an officer, and the last rank held to 20 years out of the three to entitle them to retain their rank, they would of course do so, but where the whole period has not been completed, even although an officer had passed through a military school, and obtained a certificate of qualification, he would necessarily be deprived of rank; but if three years' service had only been completed, it

would be entitled to count as the three years he is liable to serve in his turn as a militiaman.

These difficulties are understood, and will always be felt in maintaining the organization of a purely volunteer force. The remedy suggested by some of the officers is, that in all cases where a volunteer company now organized cannot be kept up to its full nominal strength by voluntary enrolment, the officers be authorized to ballot from the reserve for the number of men necessary to complete from time to time.

It is evident that any militia system which looks to efficiency must be so devised as to meet the question of labor, and at the same time be in accord with the spirit of the institutions of the country. It must therefore be apparent that the confederation of Provinces which had separate Militia Laws, and which were governed locally by different municipal regulations, renders it a matter of difficulty to perfect a uniform system for drill and training under central control, that will work equally well in all the Provinces; but considering the many difficulties and the desire of the great majority of the people to maintain an active force on the basis of voluntary enrolment, I think the ground work of the present law admirably adapted to meet the circumstances of the country, and the provision made in it for changes in detail by regulations based on Order in Council, is well suited to remedy such defects as may be found to exist, as the work of organization goes on. The law is equally applicable for a purely volunteer force, or a force raised by conscription on the basis of each locality being required to furnish its quota—all that seems requisite is a decision as to the mode, and the necessary appropriations by parliamentary estimate to cover the cost.

Apart from the question of pay, it appears to me that in the absence of stimulating causes such as would call for the country companies being ready for military duty other than drill and training, it cannot be expected that the eagerness to volunteer, which has hitherto characterized the population will continue; indeed there are indications that the nominal strength as now established in some of the Districts is the excess of the number who are inclined to volunteer for continuous service for three years, as bona fide members of corps, thus showing that as the country is reverting to its normal condition after the excitement caused by the position of affairs since 1861, the proportion of men who are inclined to volunteer for mere drill and training is diminished. It is therefore quite certain that if this state of affairs continues, and the present nominal strength is required, provision must be made for compelling each locality, as is the practice in England to furnish its quota of the total number, or failing that to apply the ballot.

The question as to drill and training on its own merits, resolves itself into one of expenditure as a preliminary to efficiency. If reduced estimates be insisted on, or rather, if enough money be not available for military equipment and all the incidental expenses necessary for the maintenance of the authorized strength on a satisfactory basis, over and above the amount required for pay, a corresponding diminution in the strength of the force to be drilled and trained should be made. A small force, carefully trained and well paid and cared for, is much more desirable from every point of view than a numerically large force without these requisites to efficiency.

In respect of drill for the current year, it