

Company Stores in good order the arms, accoutrements clothing, &c., &c., issued to him for use at camp, while any deficiencies and damages would be deducted from the amount due him for the annual drill pay and the order on the Paymaster be filled up for the balance to be paid him; this order for convenience sake might be made payable at any Bank.

The health of the men at both camps was excellent, and no casualties of any consequence occurred.

The rations were very good, no complaints of any kind and the quantity as well as the quality was satisfactory, but the forage ration of hay is not sufficient.

The general conduct of the men was very good, there were a few cases of breach of discipline which were promptly punished; each year I notice that discipline is improving.

I have to acknowledge the able and cordial support rendered me from the staff and commanding officers of the District—a support without which—or which given less heartily would make my position a very onerous one.

I have the honor to be, Sir,
Your obedient servant,

JOHN B. TAYLOR,
Lt. Colonel,

Deputy Adjutant General,
Commanding Military District No. 1.

The Adjutant General
of Militia, Ottawa.

(To be Continued.)

CORRESPONDENCE.

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The Defence of the Dominion.

To the Editor of the VOLUNTEER REVIEW.

SIR,—As the government has decided not to have any camps for Military Instruction this year—it is apparent that in their scheme of retrenchment one of the first things to be sacrificed is the defence of the country. At the same time they say it is not their intention to change the present System of Instruction.

Now the question which naturally suggests itself is:—Is it advisable to continue the present system, and if not, what better system can be adopted? This country, in my opinion, is not able to support a standing army, nor do I think it would be advisable to have one, as there would be just so many men lost to the country; and as it has been found expedient to expend a very large sum annually to encourage emigration, it would not surely do to expend a much larger sum in keeping up an army which to be of the least efficiency to the country, would have to be five times as large as the army of emigrants that annually come to the country, and it appears to me that it would be sheer folly to keep so many men in idleness—for, at all events, they would not fill any of the stations for which we bring out emi-

grants, viz, agricultural, industrial and domestic employment. Provided a sufficient number of men could be obtained (in itself a very difficult task, as men here do not relish the idea of long service) they could only be expected to form the nucleus of the army necessary to defend our country and the remainder would have to be raised from our sedentary militia (or if that branch was abolished, then some other system, as, for instance, the Prussian, would have to be adopted) which in point of fact would amount to the same thing, as it would withdraw men from their ordinary calling to one for which they would be quite unprepared—still were a call made, from my own experience of the late Fenian raids—I know it would be nobly responded to.

Our sedentary militia, if properly maintained, would do very well for the reserve; but unfortunately at present they are very far from the mark—so much so that the Lieutenant of one of the companies of Sedentaries on the Island—in reply to my question—“Who is Captain of your company?” Replied that he did not know but thought it was Mr. — (naming the Captain of the other company) and on my informing him of the fact, he said he did not know that there was more than the one company here. He also said he had no squad roll, and did not know whether there was one or not. The facts of the case are that of the six officers whose names were last published in the Gazette—one is dead, one is an American citizen living in Michigan—another is out of the limits, and two do not reside permanently on the Island, and therefore but, one is available in case their services should be required. If no better report can be shown for all the other Townships, then indeed might it be said, that Sedentary Militia existed only on paper.

Of the system of conscription, a good deal might be said on both sides. For myself, I might say that I am in favour of it. But not as it is enforced in Prussia—a grinding tyranny amounting almost to slavery—where the whole burden falls on the poor and the rich escape (despite the boast of the Prussianizers in England and here—who point to Prussia as a nation of which every man is a soldier)—and where a system of espionage is maintained, which together with the galling yoke of military service—is rapidly depopulating the country—and will eventually compel them to adopt another method more in unison with the feelings of the people.

Again I would observe that under the present military system the captains of companies are sometimes obliged to use a great deal of their own money—(to say nothing of their time and trouble) in endeavouring to keep up some semblance of a company while in camp—often being obliged to take men both physically and morally unfit:—physically, because sometimes old men hardly able to walk and sometimes little boys scarcely able to carry their rifle—sometimes

deformed or in some other way unfitted to be a soldier—who should be sound and perfect physically, as in case of actual war all others would be rejected. Then is it not the height of folly to be paying money away in instructing a lot of men in military duties who in case their services should be required would be worse than useless. To be sure they are all supposed to pass an examination by the regimental surgeon but such examination is too often a sham.

The Question might be asked by some—What has morality to do with soldiers—To them I would answer—Much very much, for it is also too true that a large number of young men are prevented from joining the service by the persuasions of their friends who look down upon the poor soldiers and affect to despise them and say they are so low and immoral that they are not fit associates for respectable persons.

Now the Captain who has all that he can do to get together a sufficient number of men to pass muster cannot be too particular as to their stamina, and I have seen men putting in their drill who were aliens—nay—I might go a step farther and say—actual enemies to Canada. At the same time—there are large numbers of smart, honest, upright and Christian men—some of them wealthy and educated—found under the Flag, and ready to risk their lives in its defence;—enough to leaven the whole mass, and who, aided by the Young Men's Christian Association (now looked upon as a necessary part of camp life) do much to elevate and improve those with whom they are brought in contact.

The number of men ordered out last year was about 34,000, the number who actually performed their drill (officers, non commissioned officers and men) was 28,848 (see report on the state of the militia.) Now in case of a rigid examination—I believe 5,000 of these would be rejected—of the remainder—fully one half came into camp at a positive loss to themselves, and as year after year the same men are required to make sacrifices—it is too much to expect that they will continue to do so long—the burden on patriotic men is too heavy and that class has to furnish the greater number of the volunteers or the force would long ere this have been a thing of the past.

Now if every man from 18 to 45, unmarried, or widowers without children (excepting those exempt from military service) was liable (as in case of war they would be) to be drafted until the number required was full—then the burden of keeping up the nucleus of an army would fall equally on all classes, rich and poor alike, and as it would be but for a short season, it would not be so heavy to be borne and better discipline would be the result. Against this it might be argued that numbers would leave the country and I suppose some would,—but not so many as might be supposed, as any one having a stake in the country would not