

the much vexed question as to the advisability of protecting our long frontier by defensive works to be erected on certain positions. Suffice it to say, that from an engineer's point of view, (in an opinion given, however, before the experience gained as to the use of such works in the Franco-Prussian war), we are in a sufficiently unfortunate position; but taking matters as they stand at present, the important question seems to be—How is the present force of active militia to be best maintained in an efficient condition?

The actual numerical state of the militia, together with the number present at each annual muster, can be at once arrived at by reference to the annual reports furnished by the Adjutant-General; but that very great difficulty is, in most instances, experienced by commanding officers in filling up the ranks of their corps, does not so clearly appear therein. That this is the case, however, is very well known, and can scarcely be wondered at when, among other reasons, we consider the rate of wages now obtainable, as compared with the pay granted to the troops, and also that, in many instances, men desirous of volunteering are prevented from doing so by their employers, who from motives of a pecuniary nature are unwilling to suffer the loss entailed upon them by even the temporary absence of their workmen.

Of the remedies proposed for this state of affairs, two, commonly urged, would appear deserving of careful consideration, viz. :—

Compulsory enlistment by ballot.

Greatly increased pay.

With regard to the first of these, the arguments against its adoption would, in the present condition of the Dominion, appear to be almost unanswerable; yet as the proposition is very frequently discussed, it may be as well to quote here a few of the most forcible.

1. Granting that it is the duty of every

man to serve in the defence of his country, the necessity for so doing is, in this case, not apparent and must be proved.

2. When a portion only are required, the most even method of distributing the necessary burden is by a voluntary force supported by taxation—the ballot being oppressive, arbitrary and unequal.

3. It is contrary both to political economy and common sense, to force unwilling men when willing ones are to be had.

4. The country generally suffers from interruption of pursuits and disturbance of civil employments.

With regard to the second remedy, it is, I think, hardly to be expected in the present economical age, that the Government will enter into competition with the labour market, and thereby enormously increase the present militia estimates; yet if the present system be continued, and full musters are expected, some additional inducement in the shape of pay, must, I fear, be held out and nothing that the volunteer can reasonably demand, in the way of uniform, arms, or equipment, withheld; and it is, I think, to the complete fulfilment of this latter requirement that we must look for the largest measure of success.

Personal popularity on the part of commanding officers, has always been found to be very effective in inducing volunteers to enlist; but where, as in some cases, this influence is not joined to a knowledge of military discipline and interior economy, its subsequent effects are often found to be deleterious, and productive of great lack of proper military subordination; so that, remembering that at the best, in cases of this sort the absence or withdrawal of the commanding officer often involves the disorganization of his corps, not much dependence can be placed upon this mode of recruitment.

So far we have only treated the subject of efficiency from a numerical point of view, but a far more important consideration presents itself, viz., that relating to the proper