

LETTERS FROM THE PEOPLE.

SUBSTITUTION OF A CANADIAN OFFICER

For an Imperial Army Officer as Commander of the Militia.

To the Editor of The Sun:

Sir—The recent suspension of the adjutant general of militia by Major General Herbert, and the harsh criticism of the general's fitness for the position of commander of the Canadian militia evoked by this incident has exhibited a phase of supreme importance to the Canadian people generally. I allude to the advocacy editorially in several of the leading Canadian journals, and by prominent citizens, that the officer commanding the militia should be a Canadian and selected from the Canadian militia, the sole reason advanced being that an imperial army officer cannot, from his environment, be "in touch" with the Canadian people.

The fact that the present excellent condition of our militia, both permanent and otherwise, must be largely credited to the imperial army officer, the "in touch" idea of its force. In nearly every one of the military districts the deputy adjutant general, the brigade major and the company officers, the sergeant-major, and the non-commissioned officers have left their impression on our militia, and as a rule assuredly possessed all the necessary requirements to gain the good of the militia.

Another argument in favor of this clause is the scarcely less important one that an officer from the imperial army, if carefully selected and possessing the necessary tact and judgment, must surpass in general and practical knowledge of the military profession any officer trained exclusively in the Canadian militia.

It has been advanced by some of our military critics that the "imperial officers," as they have been pleased to style General Leard, Middleton and Herbert, have not been "in touch" with the "genius" of the Canadian people or their militia. The only interpretation which this expression affords is that the officers appointed to the command of the Canadian militia came out to this country with an exceedingly high ideal of what this force ought to be, and in their laudable efforts to realize this ideal they have given offence to certain members of the force and have not received that support from the Canadian parliament and people which they were justified in expecting.

In his inspections of the militia in camp in the upper provinces, previous to coming down here, reports of the force in the maritime provinces that General Leard was a martinet of the most pronounced type, and had raised a fearful rumpus in the Ontario camps, in respect to the discipline of the militia, were brought before the department of militia and defence. This was done, as the general reports in the blue books testify, but were not sufficient to prevent a short time afterwards, and after General Leard's retirement, the Northwest rebellion broke out. It found our militia unprepared, especially in the vital west of Canada, which had then, in the face of the enemy, been extemporized.

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But it has been urged these officers have altogether too high an ideal for our Canadian militia. This opinion is certainly a very sorry compliment to our local force; and a subtle reproach, implied by a majority of its officers who desire to see it in every respect as near as possible to that incomparable army from which it is modeled, and of which it is an auxiliary. Nearly two million dollars are expended every year on the Canadian militia. Is it unreasonable to believe that the Canadian tax-payers, who contribute this large amount of money, expect the very best possible results from this vast expenditure. Year by year, since confederation, our militia has steadily increased in efficiency; and I do not hesitate to assert that every advance in its improvement has given intense satisfaction to large numbers of thoughtful, patriotic members of the force, as well as the great body of our fellow citizens.

his people in doubt and wonder as to whether egyptians, with all their piety learning, are a bit better than other people, who they believe were every Sunday for their great sinfulness. Another egyptian, who had been trying for weeks to bring peace to a sense of their downward course, all at once performs a somersault, and, while trying to light upon his heels, comes down head foremost with an awful crash, and this also from running after other gods—perhaps I should say girls, but that would not be accorded to. Now we have two of our religious teachers engaged over the question of infant baptism; the one contends that the devil has a red in his face for every innocent unbaptized child, and that such innocent child has no right to be buried in consecrated ground, but if the child is dangerously sick any one can perform the ceremony for baptism, even the servant girl. The other minister says in substance "gammon"—that the advocate for infant baptism, as an all saving grace, is no better than a Turkish or a Roman Catholic or a Greek. As we have all been brought up in the "true faith"—that is having been sprinkled (God help those who were not) every day, and have to fall to take the sacrament, will be hard for me to get upon the straight road. The Methodists and Baptists are zealous in their prayer meetings, and I should judge a protestant baptism—by water, and in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and the Holy Ghost, I think it would not be a bad idea for a few of us to take out letters patent and start a church of our own religion, and to this company the sergeant-major, quartermaster sergeant, color-sergeant, the late bugle-major and the anten-sargent have all come from the regiment of the 1st or 2nd or 3rd or 4th or 5th or 6th or 7th or 8th or 9th or 10th or 11th or 12th or 13th or 14th or 15th or 16th or 17th or 18th or 19th or 20th or 21st or 22nd or 23rd or 24th or 25th or 26th or 27th or 28th or 29th or 30th or 31st or 32nd or 33rd or 34th or 35th or 36th or 37th or 38th or 39th or 40th or 41st or 42nd or 43rd or 44th or 45th or 46th or 47th or 48th or 49th or 50th or 51st or 52nd or 53rd or 54th or 55th or 56th or 57th or 58th or 59th or 60th or 61st or 62nd or 63rd or 64th or 65th or 66th or 67th or 68th 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