

I had served in India and at home both as a regimental assistant surgeon (in the 24th Regt.) and as a surgeon in the Army Medical Department. Being in Canada in 1885, I had volunteered and joined the Halifax Provisional Battalion on the breaking out of the Northwest troubles, and had served during the campaign in medical charge of that corps. During that campaign I found the regimental medical system as defective in the Northwest as it has ever proved itself elsewhere. So defective was it, as far as my own personal experience went, that I was prompted to expose its deficiencies in a letter, over my own signature, which appeared in a service paper, *The Canadian Militia Gazette*, then being published in Montreal. The date of the issue was the 2nd June, 1885.

To publish such a letter at the time was undoubtedly a breach of military discipline which only a disinterested desire for improvement in the service could or should condone.

Here is a copy of that letter :

“THE CAMP, MEDICINE HAT,

“ 21st May, 1885.

“ *To the Editor of the Canadian Militia Gazette.*

“ DEAR SIR,—I should think it would be of interest at present to medical officers serving with the troops at the front and throughout the Dominion, if you would devote a space in your columns to a discussion of the relative merits of the regimental and departmental medical systems. As an army surgeon of some ten years service, I have had in my time experience of both. My experience as a militia surgeon dates only from the beginning of the present campaign. I have had, therefore, no opportunity of ascertaining the views of my militia confreres on this subject, but I think the present time opportune and the column as appropriate for this discussion. At all events, I have no doubt but that this campaign will have opened the eyes of most of us to the necessity of reorganization. Should this take the form of the departmental system now prevailing in the British service? It has been found in war time that the purely regimental system is a failure. Has it not proved so on the present occasion? Of course our regimental hospitals have not been properly equipped as such, nor have our field hospitals (such as I have seen of them at least) been put on a proper footing. But would not a well-organized departmental service have been more efficient, more movable and cheaper than the present one? With a Surgeon-General at Ottawa, as head of the department, one Deputy Surgeon-General for each Province with a suitable staff of surgeons-major and surgeons under him (transferable on duty, as required, from one point to another within the Province, from one corps to another, and available for home and foreign service), we would have a simple, cheap and readily movable staff, possessing more authority, independence and *esprit de corps* than can ever be obtained under the present system. I only throw out these ideas,