

# THE CANADIAN MILITARY GAZETTE.

(SUCCESSOR TO THE CANADIAN MILITIA GAZETTE.)

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### NOTE AND COMMENT.

It is pleasant to note the indignation aroused in the Imperial House of Commons by the statement made the other day during the debate on the volunteer estimates that some employers of labour prohibited their men from belonging to the volunteers. One honorable member suggested that the Government withhold any further contracts from an immense contracting firm that followed this unpatriotic course. If all of this fuss has been made over the interference of employers with the English volunteers how much more cause is there for a protest by us in Canada over the oft recurring interference of Canadian employers of labor with their men who are in the Active Militia or would be if they were only allowed. The Canadian active militiaman occupies a much more important place in the scheme of national defence than does the English volunteer. The latter can

only be called out for active service in the event of foreign invasion a remote contingency: the Canadian militiaman is liable to be called out at any moment not only to repulse invasion but to suppress seditious movement within the Dominion and even to assist in the maintenance of the civil authority. The militia service is the country's first guarantee of security.

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Among the amendments to the constitution of the United States adopted by the first session of the first Congress in 1789, was article II reading: "A well regulated militia being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed." On general principles we are not in favour of following American notions either of law or military discipline, but a law emphasizing the above principle would not be amiss on the statute book and might put a stop to the unpatriotic employers who say to their men, "Leave the militia or my service. Take your choice." That a well regulated militia is essential to the security of Canada whether it be threatened from within or without has been proved often enough, goodness knows. The lessons of the American invasions of 1812-13, the Fenian invasions of 1866 and 1870, the Riel rebellions and the hundred and one cases when portions of the force have been called out in aid of the civil power should be proof enough in all conscience that the militia is the very sheet anchor of national security, and we do not take the magnificent "Blake" and her gallant consorts out of consideration either.

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This importance of militia is what those selfish and unpatriotic persons who discharge members of our citizen soldiery from their employment because they hold themselves in readiness to uphold law and order and the liberties of this fair Canada

of ours should think of, and if they cannot think of it in the right light of their own accord, they should be brought to the proper state of mind by the application of the law. If there is no law on the statute books under which these persons can be punished it would be well to put one on as soon as may be. Some good people outside of the force find it impossible to believe that there is any considerable number of persons in the community who would be guilty of such an offense against good citizenship; it appears to them impossible that business men should be unable to understand of themselves how important a protection the militia might be found at any time in the future, as it has so often in the past, and how necessary to the security of their own possessions and the continued prosperity of their own business. But the fact that there are very many of them is but too well known by those who have the burden of maintaining the efficiency of the militia on their shoulders.

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Could not the Militia Act as it stands be employed to bring these gentry to reason? The act provides that, when called out for service, if companies of the Active Militia are not filled up to their full strength by men voluntarily enlisted the captains can fill their ranks up to the required strength by balloting. Just let the captains resort to the ballot for one or two years and the present objections on the part of employers to the volunteer system of recruiting for the militia will rapidly disappear. Our British instincts naturally recoil from anything resembling conscription and the medicine will be impalatable but one or two good doses will probably effect a permanent cure. When employers realize that through refusing permission to their men to serve in the militia they render themselves liable to be ballotted and made