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Sunday 9 Aug/63

My dear Mr Charles,

I am much obliged for the portion of the Sanitary Commission Report which is doubly interesting to me - as showing the conclusions at which those best informed on such matters in England have come to - and as proving how closely they coincide with the steps that I have thought should be adopted since perhaps be aware that my brother the Judicial Commr. at Stafford made last year definite proposals for the establishment of Sanitary Officers under the various Governments, as a sequel to the Chubera Report in which he was engaged at that time.

Of course we shall have all these proposals sent out to this County in paper form before long but I may say in anticipation of any orders that the Ho of State may send that Board in my opinion will not work with us, and that for any practical result you must have a

responsible health officer, assisted if you please  
by some coadjutors from the principal public  
departments concerned with such matters - but  
a definite personal responsibility will be required  
to give vitality to any such schemes. The passive  
resistance will be very great. I remember but 4 or  
5 years ago trying to make a move in the direction  
of <sup>suburban</sup> such ording cleanliness in the vicinity of our  
great towns & stations as must be about the first  
steps in any course of reform in these things, and  
being met by a Report from a gentleman in the  
Legislature Council to the effect that our English  
habits in connexion with certain functions of  
nature were "peculiar ideas". He evidently did not  
at all appreciate that the peculiarities were however  
essential to cleanliness & health.

There is a good deal that is useful in the  
Genl's suggestions - but naturally a good deal  
also that is quite impractical & visionary.  
Some of the assertions - such as that some Barracks  
<sup>contain</sup> contain in one room a quarter or half a Regiment -  
are to say the least of it exaggerated. If we  
were to do all that they want we should spend  
the whole surplus revenues on the Soldiers for  
some years to come. Now there should be moderation

in all things, and without denying that a great deal  
may be done for the Soldiers with money, it is to my  
mind the greatest mistake to think that the mere  
expenditure of money will make our troops healthy.  
A very great deal certainly depends on the  
general management & discipline.

Amongst other things most properly mentioned as  
a sure origin of vice & concurrent disease is want  
of employment. and the remedy preached up is the  
provision of Workshops & Reading rooms & so forth  
Of course these are things in the right direction. ~~But~~  
that is all. For my part I would refuse to give a  
Rupee to build workshops until the Horse Guards  
had made the occupation of the men in the workshops  
a part of the Regimental system. Every Regiment  
with even a very small degree of care, & in a very  
short time, might be made an organized body  
containing within its ranks artificers capable of  
doing for it everything almost that it could require.  
Workshops properly organized once started in the  
regular course of things keep themselves supplied  
with efficient workmen of all classes just as  
easily as the Regt. now supplies itself with Drill  
sergeants. I should conceive that, even after  
a few years, all additional expense caused by such  
an organization would be more than met by

very soon loses the habit of spontaneous action. He  
suffers by doing nothing out of his mere regimental  
routine & by being incapable of doing more. What  
is the remedy? It seems to me that it is quite  
obvious. Let him be brought to do all of those things  
as matters of duty, which it is really right that he  
should do, and which a well disposed man who was  
a free agent would be ready to do. Such things I take  
to be to Work & to Learn. The true Regimental  
system would be that which thus as a matter of  
course provided an organized & systematic  
impulse in the shape of duty for acquiring a reason-  
able amount of elementary education, and for practicing  
useful Arts, when the more special calls of Military  
duty allowed leisure for such study & work.

When we have accomplished this we shall I  
think have a perfect system - if not a perfect  
Army. Of course I don't mean to suggest that a  
Soldier should have no leisure, or should be kept  
under undue restraint at all times. Nothing of this  
sort would be necessary. But on the other hand  
they have no sort of moral right to be habitual idlers.  
I don't see why a Soldier should not work in the long  
run as much as a Civilian <sup>in his class & life</sup> in doing his Military  
duty of course as work. and I have no doubt that  
if he did he would be in every sense a better  
man for it.

I may perhaps add that I am perfectly sensible that such a scheme as I have spoken of must be put in a much more definite shape to be held to command itself as a practical plan. But this seems to me easy enough. I should say that there ought to be a standard fixed minimum of artificers in every Regt. to be accounted by men taught within its own shops. That besides these regular workmen all the rest should be encouraged to learn a trade. This could be done by making work in the shops under certain rules equivalent to duity. It would besides be facilitated by the share of the profits that every man should get in addition to his exemption from other duty. Also the regular artificers might receive some sort of fee for the apprenticeship, or instruction of the other men, or some allowance to be regulated by the number of extra men who worked at their several trades, so as to make it the personal interest of the regular Artificers to induce their comrades to learn & to practise some trade. A healthy rivalry in these things might also be set up by the Comm<sup>d</sup> in Chief reviewing annually the efficiency of the Workshops as he does that of the shooting & giving honorary badges for excellence.

Of this I feel quite certain that the time occupied by men at work at trades in the sort of way I have suggested would not be found in practice to interfere

with their officing in the performance of their mere Military duties. The proof of this I think is given before hand by the Royal Engineers who in spite of their constant shooting & working, are in most matters of shooting & drill quite as good as an average Regt of the line to say the least of it. And like remarks apply in a great measure to the Marines. I look upon it as indisputable that the more handy a man is a general way the more useful he will be as a Soldier, & that time given to making him handy & shifty is in fact bestowed in the best possible way. The principle which I look upon as of vital importance for securing a really efficient body of Engineer Officers for time of war, is that during peace a large proportion of them should be employed on ordinary civil engineering works; thus you make them men of resource and capable of devising and carrying out the duties of their profession in the field under circumstances of difficulty or danger with vastly increased power. And the same thing applies to every Soldier to some degree. The time occupied in mere shooting or fighting by the Soldier is most actually engaged is after all very small. What he mainly has to do is to keep himself alive & in health during the intervals between his fights. The bulk of our Staff Departments are occupied with this, and the more capable the Soldier himself is of cooperating really in their functions,

of feeding, clothing & housing, the more chance is there of a successful result under the peculiar conditions which commonly makes an Army so essentially dependent on its own resources for all such things.

Mr. Nightingale's letter is interesting & enthusiastic as I dare say it ought to be. I suppose that I am more hard hearted - and less sentimental. My view is to secure efficiency. I don't much care about killing a few men if that end is gained - However in practice the only way to get real efficiency is to do in the main what the Lady desires, & so I am not going to dispute with her as to her stand-point. In this as in other matters real progress is only to be got by a combination of the efforts of all parties.

I am afraid that I have inflicted a long story on you. But I thought it as well to say that I look to something beyond bricks & mortar - drains - ventilation - and doctors - to diminish the Black area. You will have much more power to produce an effect in the direction in which I think an attempt ought to be made than I can have - and I have therefore written what I had to say on the subject - to be judged by you for what it is worth.

With the Governor General's assent Mr. G. Taylor is to come up to see us here -

Acquaint Public Works Dept

Yours truly  
A. H. Mackenzie  
Col. R. Service