

The great importance of the re-organization of the Militia, impels me to extend this report somewhat beyond its formal limits; for which, I hope, the warm interest I feel in the subject may be regarded as a sufficient excuse.

The framers of the new Constitution seem to have assumed, that the present Militia system is inefficient, and its defects are too evident to require to be pointed out. That some remedy is needed, all agree. The point to be determined is, as to the nature of the remedy to be applied.

The people of this State cannot be said to be wanting in military spirit, for they have always responded, with alacrity, to any call upon them, and at this time numerous organizations in each county are calling upon the State authorities for arms, with an earnestness which gives evidence of their deep interest in the subject. And yet, there is no State in the Union which exhibits a more lamentable example of disorganization, in this branch of the public service. The true explanation must be sought in the inefficiency and confusion of the laws regulating the Militia, and the neglect exhibited by successive Legislatures to amend them. The Ninth Article of the Constitution declares it to be the "duty of the Legislature to pass laws for the enrollment of the Militia."

"SECTION 1. It shall be the duty of the Legislature to pass laws for the enrollment of the Militia; to provide for districting the State into divisions, brigades, battalions, regiments and companies, and to pass laws for the effectual encouragement of Volunteer Corps, by some mode which may induce the formation and continuance of at least one volunteer company in every county and division in the city of Baltimore; the company, battalion and regimental officers, (staff officers excepted,) shall be elected by the persons composing their several companies, battalions and regiments."

The only attempt which has been made by the Legislature to carry into effect this express injunction, was the passage of the act of 1852, ch. 365, which falls far short of the Constitutional requirement. This act applies only to "Uniformed Volunteer Companies," and prescribes the mode in which the Adjutant General shall furnish them with arms, &c.; but there has been passed no law for "the enrollment of the Militia; for districting the State," or for the "encouragement of Volunteer Corps," except the act of 1853, ch. 243, which applies exclusively to Volunteer Corps in the city of Baltimore. In consequence of this failure, there is scarcely a county in the State possessing even the single company required by the Constitution.

The vast importance of judicious legislation upon this subject is sufficiently obvious to all, and requires no enforcement from the undersigned, even if it were proper in him to suggest it. But there are a few prominent points connected with this subject, which it may not be out of place to notice here.