



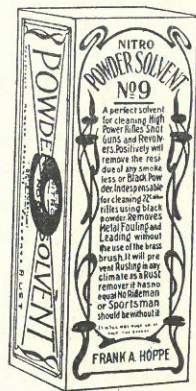
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THE NATIONAL GUARD MAGAZINE

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THE NATIONAL GUARD MAGAZINE

Volume IX.

JUNE, 1912

Number 6

Let Both Sides "Tote Fair!"

Survey of the Present Relations Existing Between the Regular and Volunteer Forces of the Country—Persistent "Tips" From
Washington of "Interim Commissions" of Regulars to Supercede Guardsmen.

TO THE Mexican situation may be charged the transition through which the National Guard of the various States is bound to go. While the most optimistic of us have believed that sooner or later the National Guard was to become the first volunteer army of the United States, a combination of circumstances seems to have precipitated matters and it now seems likely that the imminent intervention in Mexico may bring about the transition of the National Guard from militiamen to volunteers sooner than was expected.

It would seem opportune to discuss fairly and calmly all the circumstances and conditions in connection therewith, in order that the National Guard of the country may thoroughly understand the various features as they may arise and the bearing of all interests and influences on these various features.

When the Militia Pay Bill was first proposed, the eventuality of foreign service was not so seriously considered as it was when the Dick law was amended in 1908, and then the thoughts of the persons framing the law were largely of the experiences of 1898 rather than of any probable future disturbance. Besides, the amendment to the Dick law in 1898 was supposed to have been sufficient to provide for the use of the Organized Militia in foreign service.

It was not until Madero commenced to achieve some success in his revolution that the War Department began to consider seriously the eventuality of American service in Mexico, and when a searching study of the law as applied to the conditions that might arise revealed the questionable right to use the Organized Militia to augment the Regular Army, the War Department made a more thorough investigation of the legal status of the National Guard. It was plain that the Dick law divided the Militia of the country into two classes, the organized and the unorganized. It was also plain that Congress had provided for calling forth the Militia in accordance with the Constitution, but when the three provisions of the Constitution—namely, upholding the laws of the Union, suppressing insurrections, and repelling invasion—were applied to Mexican intervention, it became quite plain that intervention was neither of these three things, and therefore the Militia could not be used in such an eventuality. The opinion of the Judge Advocate General and of the Attorney General followed the request of the newly inaugurated Secretary of War for enlightenment on the subject.

These opinions brought the Militia Pay Bill up short in the Military Committee of the House and again our best laid plans were interrupted.

A MONKEY WRENCH IN OUR MACHINE.

The fact that last year the War Department objected to certain features of the Pay Bill as then pending in Congress and "threw a monkey-wrench into the machine" so late in the session that it was too late to pass the Pay Bill before the adjournment of Congress, and

the further singular coincident that the "monkey-wrench" was not thrown until after the increased officers' bill had been made a law, led thousands of National Guardsmen to believe that the War Department had withheld its report and objections on the Pay Bill designedly until after the Army bill was safely through and until it should be too late to pass our bill before adjournment. It is not the purpose of THE NATIONAL GUARD MAGAZINE at this time to discuss the pros and cons of this sentiment, other than to say that such a view was taken and honestly held and caused wide and frequent excommunications among officers and men high and low in the service throughout the country.

Undaunted and undiscouraged, the Executive Committee of the National Guard Association of the United States, advised and assisted by the Adjutants General and National Guard officers of high rank and much prominence from all the States, in conference with the Chief of Staff and other representatives of the War Department, redrafted the Militia Pay Bill, meeting all of the objections of the War Department and receiving the approval of the Secretary of War and the Chief of Staff of the Army. The bill was accordingly reintroduced in Congress last December and was making favorable headway in the Military Affairs Committee of the House when a new Secretary of War was appointed. The committee had asked the War Department for a report on the bill and had every reason to expect that the report would be favorable. The Mexican situation, however, as outlined above, had begun to make some one sit up and take notice and the result was that an unfavorable report on the bill went to the committee.

ALLEGED PLANS FOR EXPLOITING GUARD FOR ARMY OFFICERS.

The moment this was sent broadcast through out the land again the suspicions of thousands of National Guardsmen were aroused and the War Department was charged with further designs against the service. In the light of the very favorable attitude of General Leonard Wood, Chief of Staff, toward the National Guard, it would have been easy for the National Guard of the country to have been reassured on the alleged War Department duplicity had there not cropped out from supposed confidential sources elaborate plans of the War Department, or at least some division of it, for disrupting the National Guard and building up from it a volunteer army in case intervention in Mexico should become necessary. The information from these confidential sources was not in the form of mere rumors, but was passed on from mouth to mouth by National Guardsmen who had visited Washington and who had received "tips" from Army officers and clerks in the War Department itself, and in some instances, it is understood, the orders and plans of mobilization and transportation, and even certain commissions called "interim commissions" were shown. Officers of the National Guard in the various States who had personal friends on the General Staff, seemed to have had no difficulty in learning a great deal