

TO PETITION PREMIER IN DEFENCE OF LESSARD

Prominent Citizens Say They Want Militia Run in Proper Way.

From unofficial sources comes the information that a number of prominent Toronto citizens are planning to rise to the defence of Major-General Lessard, as a result of Major-General Hughes' "indiscretions" and the attack which was made upon him for his test mobilization during the Minister's speech at the Y.M.C.A. last week. There is a movement under way, fostered by citizens who claim that there is neither a political nor military aspect to the case, but that they are merely lovers of fair play. The object behind the move is to circulate a petition protesting against the Minister of Militia's action, and to forward this petition for the consideration of Sir Robert Borden. The matter is still in a very incomplete stage, but the men behind it feel that it is time that Major-General Lessard was defended by the general public.

"The Minister of Militia has been talking in a most disgraceful way," stated one of the agitators to-day, in explanation of their course of action, "and he has disgusted both officers and men. Such conduct must necessarily discourage men who are anxious to volunteer, but who are holding back from doing so because they do not know what treatment they will receive once they join the ranks. No military man knows when his turn may come next. We are all Canadians behind the move, and not politicians, and what we are anxious to see is the militia of the country run in the proper way. This man has done much harm to the country; he is doing his best to stifle individuality. The matter is a very serious one. If it was not so serious the officers would all quit right now, for they don't know what day the Minister of Militia will come to Toronto and drop them all."