

THE LEWIS EQUIPMENT.

ON Friday, the 28th August, at the Montreal Military Institute the members had an opportunity of witnessing and examining to the fullest the Lewis equipment. To those of our readers who have not had an opportunity of seeing the equipment perhaps a few notes about it may be of interest. Mr. Patrick Lewis, Government Stores Department, Quebec, is the inventor of the equipment. Mr. Lewis served in the 69th Regiment, and it was while serving there that the idea struck him of trying to secure an equipment that would not only be an improvement on the old, but would also lessen the weight. The outcome of the equipment now shown is the result of much time and money. He has now arrived at a state which he thinks is in keeping with the conditions called for in the future equipment of soldiers. The object Mr. Lewis has arrived at is to enable a man to carry his equipment on his back without having the pressure of a belt to sustain the weight on the back. By this equipment the weight is distributed on the shoulders. The waist belt can be unbuckled and the kit will remain the way it is without any drag on the body. A very important thing is that there are no straps across the chest and the arms are perfectly free. By undoing the waist belt the whole can be taken off at once just like taking off a coat, and in the same way it can be put on. In the event of soldiers at the front using this equipment there would be no danger, in a sudden alarm, of forgetting anything. Say, for instance, that the men were lying down, and that they were called out in haste, the equipment is so complete that a man would have just to grasp it and throw it on, and all he would have to do would be to fasten one buckle. Nothing is forgotten because everything is complete. Another important thing is that the ammunition can be got at in any position, lying down or kneeling. The object nowadays is to carry as much ammunition as possible in action. To arrive at this the new equipment provides for the carrying of 240 rounds, 30 rounds in front in 3 bandoliers, 10 rounds in each, and 210 rounds in an ammunition box on the back, which can be got at by the man himself, who can take out 10 rounds at a time as he requires. This box with the 210 rounds can be carried on the small part of the back, and when tired with carrying it there he can raise it so that it will rest between the shoulders by removing two of the straps.

The valise can be made to contain the ordinary soldier's outfit and carry a heavy or light load. It can be carried on the top or bottom. The haversack, water bottle, frog for the bayonet, etc., are all attached to the belt, so that when you take off one you take off the whole. In opening the kit there is found, in addition to the ordinary articles, a waterproof coat, made so as to completely cover the soldier and kit, with a hood attached to cover the helmet, and a pair of leggings. This coat can also be used as a covering in the event of a soldier having to lie down without a tent at night.

The water bottle is provided with a filter, so that water taken from any place, whether impure or otherwise, will always be fit to drink. This is a very important and necessary addition to a soldier's outfit and is a great improvement on that at present in use in the Imperial service. There is also carried with the equipment a knife, fork and spoon combination. It is made in one piece, and so arranged as to be detached into two, so that the knife and fork can be used separately.

Another good idea is the spade, which was shown. It is made so that the handle can be doubled up, the result being that it has a great advantage over the present 18-inch one now in use. With this one the soldier has available for use a 3-foot spade. This is done by doubling back the handle and running a tube over the joint. There was then exhibited a tent pole fitting, which enables any person in a tent to tighten or slacken the 21 guy ropes from the inside without having to go outside the tent at all, by simply turning

a screw fitting. Two equipments were exhibited, one in brown leather and the other in ordinary buff, made in England.

Several of the members tried on a skeleton equipment, to which was attached a piece of lead weighing 21 pounds, to show that the weight of the kit, etc., was carried on the shoulders. The whole equipment shown weighs 22 pounds, that is, including 30 rounds of .303 ammunition. With the addition of 210 rounds the whole outfit weighs less than 30 pounds. This equipment appears to come up to that laid down by The Broad Arrow in a recent issue.

The officers present, and they fully represented the Military District, each and all expressed themselves as being fully satisfied with the equipment. It is but right, therefore, that, in the interest of the force at large, the Government should undertake to adopt the means to test this equipment before equipping the force. In view of the length of time that the force has been without a serviceable outfit, it would not cause any inconvenience by withholding this decision until it was given a fair trial.

The Hon. Dr. Borden, Minister of Militia, spent an hour in looking into the merits of the Lewis, and expressed himself as much pleased with all that was shown him. It now rests with the Department as to whether they afford an opportunity for the Lewis to compete with other equipments that may be brought before them.

Major-General Gascoigne, who will have, no doubt, a great deal to do with the securing of a proper equipment, should take time in deciding such an important question.

Capt. Wurtele, Quebec, as a promoter of the equipment, and also on account of the interest which he takes in the force, was present and explained the different parts. The officers present expressed themselves as much indebted to Mr. Lewis and Capt. Wurtele for the lucid way in which they explained matters. It is the intention of the promoters to have the equipment brought to the notice of the Imperial authorities immediately.

ISSUE OF THE NEW RIFLE.

To-day the new Lee-Enfield rifles will be issued from headquarters to the corps that are going into camp. Twenty-five rounds per man of the cordite loaded nickel-cased bullet ammunition will also be issued. Each man will fire 20 rounds in independent firing, and where it is practicable five rounds will be used in volley firing. This year there will be no magazine practice, but it is expected that next year it will be included in the course. Very lucid instructions have been issued as to the care of the new rifle, and if followed out there should be little danger of damage being done to the rifle. Only a sufficient number will be available for putting one corps through each day and will be returned to stores immediately after.

ROYAL MILITARY COLLEGE.

THE papers regarding the Royal Military College were brought before the House the other night. Among the papers is the annual report of the commandant, which consists of a defence of the college administration. The visitors' report of 18th November, 1895, which is signed by W. Powell, J. T. Duchesnay, H. Smith and D. Macpherson, dwells on the fact that, for the good of the college and its best interests, several of the staff should be replaced by better men, and also the commandant. It further adds that it is quite plain that that officer does not take the interest in his work that he should do, and that his supervision of those under him is very lax. They give this as the reason for the want of confidence in the college throughout the country. Capt. Wurtele, Dr. Dorval and Prof. Harris also come in for unfavorable comment. A letter from the commandant of Aug. 15 is included, regretfully acquiescing in the decision of the Government.