

THE CANADIAN MILITIA GAZETTE

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Another Volume Ended.

With this number, we bring to a close the fifth volume of the CANADIAN MILITIA GAZETTE, and the usual index will shortly be issued so as to complete the volume for binding. To those who make prompt application, we can furnish numbers found wanting on their files. The past year has been one of unusual activity in military affairs in the Dominion, and the record preserved in a volume of this paper will therefore be of special interest.

In the ordinary course, we would have another number this year, but as the day of publication falls on Christmas, we have determined to observe this as our first holiday, and in compensation for the loss of reading matter which would scarce be perused in any event until the holiday festivities of civil life are over, we promise a double number for New Year's Day, when the MILITIA GAZETTE will appear in altered form, involving a permanent increase in reading matter, and improvement in shape and general appearance.

The Editor takes this opportunity to publicly thank the many kind contributors throughout the country, who, without other reward than the satisfaction of doing a good turn, have assisted in keeping the readers of this paper posted as to the events transpiring at the various military centres; and a continuance of these favours is cordially invited. To all the above friends, and to the Militia in general, we wish a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year, and in advance thank them for the expressions of good will which it has annually been our good fortune to receive at this season.

We may perhaps be pardoned for remarking that to enclose a subscription with it is a neat way of emphasizing a holiday compliment to a newspaper man.

The Magazine Rifle.

The Magazine rifle, of which about 120,000 have been manufactured, has already been considerably improved upon, and new issues, to be designated officially Mark II., will possess the following advantages: 1. The magazine will contain 10 instead of 7 cartridges, the 10 lying in two rows of 5, lying on top of each other, and coming to the action alternately, one from each of the two rows or files of 5. 2. The butt-plate will be of brass instead of iron, and is without a trap. 3. Oil-bottle and pull-throughs are abolished. 4. The dial and aperture-sights are abolished. 5. Safety-bolt and safety-bent in the cocking-piece are done away with. 6. The foresight reverts to the "barleycorn" as in the Martini-Henry, the Major Lewes sight being abandoned so far as the foresight is concerned. 7. A longer sword-bayonet is contemplated. To clean the rifle the soldier is to carry a piece of whipcord in his knapsack. The rifle will only be sighted to 1,900 yards.

The official report presented by Major-General P. Smith, Colonel Sir H. Halford, and Col. C. G. Slade to the War Office on certain articles which appeared in the *Times* last month on the subject of the magazine rifle has been published. From the articles the committee have formulated thirty-one charges, with which they have dealt in detail, and they claim to have a full and complete answer to each accusation. The committee conclude with the following observations on the subject:—

When the committee was formed in April, 1883, there were four systems of magazine rifles submitted to them, among which was the Lee. They framed a table of tests to which every magazine rifle should be subjected to prove its safety and endurance. Up to November, 1885, twenty-seven other forms of rifles had been received, and of the whole of these thirty-one rifles there were only two which survived the tests and trials—viz., the Lee and Owen Jones. On the reassembly of the committee in September, 1886, the Owen Jones, a block action, was abandoned. From September, 1886, to January, 1889, twenty-two additional inventions were forwarded for their report, and the whole of these, for one reason or another, were rejected.

During the whole of this time the Lee breech-action was being used almost daily in experiments with various kinds of ammunition, which were sent to the committee for report. There were no serious accidents, and nothing occurred to give the committee the slightest cause to mistrust its strength or stability. Therefore, the choice of the Lee action arose not so much from selection as from the fact that it alone of all the systems survived the tests and trials to which it was subjected by the committee. While the trials were proceeding the committee obtained permission for the manufacture of a limited number of Lee rifles for their trials, and also for the purpose of testing ammunition at Woolwich. These were followed by the manufacture of 350 for trial by battalions and ships.

In the reports of these trials there were some remarks of failure of various parts of the rifles. There was no suspicion of anything approaching to the condemnation of the rifle as a whole; but, on the contrary, a remarkable concurrence of opinion that it was a serviceable weapon and fit for the Service. The committee agree with the *Times* that the principal witness is the rifle itself. They are confident it will be made as efficient and trustworthy as the rifle with which they made their trials. They accept full and entire responsibility for having recommended it, as they are satisfied it is not only the best weapon that was brought before them, but one which in every respect is fit for Her Majesty's Service.

The committee have abstained from answering fully on the subject of the ammunition, as this was taken out of their hands. There was no difficulty with the ammunition supplied to them for their experimental work, and they have reason to believe there is a great improvement in the more recent supplies that have been made to the troops.

Noting the fact that the Imperial authorities have conferred upon Col. Herbert the local rank of Major-General while commanding the Canadian militia, the *Broad Arrow* proceeds: "As Major-General Herbert was born in July, 1851, he is without exception the youngest general officer in Her Majesty's service, being, moreover, fourteen months junior in point of age to H.R.H. the Duke of Connaught. In these days of fortunate Guardsmen, who are so completely outstripping the less favoured brethren of the line in the race for promotion and appointments, his luck has been almost phenomenal. General Herbert entered the Grenadier Guards as ensign and lieutenant 5th November, 1870, became lieutenant and captain November, 1874, brevet-major November, 1882, captain and lieutenant-colonel May, 1883, colonel in the army August, 1889, and was appointed a C. B. during the present