

THE CANADIAN MILITIA GAZETTE

A Weekly Journal devoted to the Interests of the Active Force of the Dominion.

Fifth Year.
VOL. IV, No. 48.

OTTAWA, THURSDAY, 28th NOVEMBER, 1889.

\$1.50 per annum in advance.
Single Copies Five Cents.

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Topics of the Week.

Parliament has been summoned for the 16th of January, a month earlier than usual. This means that there will be more time available, before the warm weather, for the discussion of the public business. The military members should avail themselves of the opportunity to speak on behalf of desired changes in the system. There will be no lack of opportunity early in the session, and a general expression of opinion could not fail to be interesting. We do not mean a flood of fault-finding for political effect, but rather a non political discussion in which the military men on both sides can lay their views before the House and country.

At a meeting of the Imperial Federation League held in London, Eng., on the 15th inst., one of Canada's representatives was Lt.-General Laurie, M.P. He moved a vote of thanks to the Right Hon. the Lord Mayor "for his patriotic desire to further the cause of Imperial Federation by granting the use of the Mansion House, and for his kindness in presiding on this occasion." Representing as he did, he said, the Imperial Federation in Canada, he felt that he might be permitted to say a few words in moving this vote of thanks. There was some misapprehension as to the objects of the League. The concessions would have to come very largely from them. It was true that they had local government in Canada, but they were still looked upon in some sense as a dependency. They were not prepared to remain for ever a dependency. They demanded and insisted that they should be citizens of a common empire, not merely subjects of the British Empire, but members of a common Empire. That was the Canadian ambition, and they meant to attain it.

They do not seem to have a very happy way of managing their military forces in the United States, at least so far as the regular army and navy are concerned. Henry George's paper, the *Standard*, which probably voices the sentiments of a considerable proportion of those whose taxes go to maintain the services, a few weeks ago characterized the military and naval service as a "disgrace to the Republic." Coming down to particulars, we are told that the enlisted men are deserting by wholesale, "because they have poor pay, hard times, and are treated like dogs"; that men can scarcely be obtained for the services, and when in are only retained "by guarding and treating them like convicts." The officers are mainly blamed: "The graduates of Annapolis and West Point form a privileged class of life office holders whom taxpayers are

obliged to support for the rest of their days, and who regard the American citizen who enters the army and navy by enlistment as the noble of four quarterings regarded the peasant." The article from which we quote thus concludes: "If we are to have an army and navy this whole system ought to be broken up. There should be but one entrance to army or navy, by enlistment, and West Point and Annapolis ought to be retained for the supplementary instruction of officers who have risen from the ranks. Abolish all rewards for capturing deserters and let all the enlisted men go. We have enough officers in the navy to man, from stem to stern, all vessels that there is any excuse for keeping at sea, and enough commissioned officers in the army to do all the Indian fighting now needed. The truth is that the American republic needs no army or navy. We are so strong and so situated that we can have no war with a foreign power unless we go to work to kick somebody into fighting us, and even in that case our army and navy would be of no use."

A Toronto man speaking the other day on the subject of the Garrison Common range, thus openly expressed himself: "We want that ground for a mile track; there are more people in this town interested in horse racing than in rifle shooting, and the range has got to be closed." The common, however, is the property of a Government in whose estimation rifle shooting ranks far enough ahead to ensure that the military men shall not be jockeyed out of the only available practice ground.

The report of the annual rifle meeting of the lately re-organized Seventh Fusiliers, appears elsewhere in this issue, and gives evidence that there is no lack of interest in the new corps. Col. Tracy has been very highly spoken of as a commanding officer, and apparently with good reason. The presence of the School of Infantry at London no doubt has had a stimulating effect, and if the rivalry already noticeable between the two corps so far as rifle shooting is concerned, can be extended so as to include other branches of military efficiency, the Seventh will become one of the smartest corps in the service.

If present indications may be relied upon, and we see no reason why they should not, the military rifle league proposed for next season will be an immense affair. Inquiry elicits the information that the acting secretary of the Montreal Rifle Association has already received intimation of the probable entry of no less than twenty-seven teams, and several of the large shooting centres are not yet heard from at all. These are the teams promised: Prince Edward Island—One team each from the 82nd Battalion, the P.E.I. Garrison Artillery and the Charlottetown Engineers. Nova Scotia—Two teams from the 63rd Rifles, two from the Halifax Garrison Artillery, and one each from the 66th Fusiliers, the West Riding (Imperial) Regiment, and from Truro. New Brunswick—Two teams from the 62nd Fusiliers, one from the St. John Rifles, and one from Moncton. Of the Montreal corps, the 3rd Victoria Rifles promise three teams, the 5th Royal Scots two, the 6th Fusiliers two, and the 65th Battalion one. In Ontario, the Royal Military College, A