

# THE CANADIAN MILITIA GAZETTE

A WEEKLY JOURNAL DEVOTED TO THE INTERESTS OF THE ACTIVE FORCE OF THE DOMINION.

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## CORRESPONDENCE.

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History has been making, in so far as concerns the North-west campaign at least, very rapidly during the past week; for, since the date of our first number, not only has General Middleton's force achieved complete success in the field, but that success has been crowned by the capture of Louis Riel, the head and front of the insurrection, and with this double event armed resistance of the half-breeds is in all probability at an end, and the question of their claims becomes a matter, as it should always have remained, for constitutional decision. The question of the disposition of the prisoner is an interesting one, but does not concern us, being a civil, and not a military matter. The General has finished an admirably conducted campaign by an admirable coup, and when he has handed over Riel to the civil authorities his responsibility on that score ceases.

We wish we could think that this was the end of the whole trouble, but it seems manifest that though the Indians were incited to revolt by the half-breeds, these are now powerless to control the aids they have invoked, which will require to be dealt with independently by our forces. The perpetrators of the Frog Lake massacre are yet unpunished, and the future security of the district demands that they should be whipped into a sense of their crime, and suffer a just retribution for that wanton destruction of life. The unsuccessful sortie on Poundmaker's braves requires to be backed up by a more decisive

blow before that doughty chieftain will be brought to an understanding of the hopelessness of his revolt, and the prospective difficulties of such an Indian campaign are far greater than those of the half-breed one, and may, if the Indians, without coming to heavy fighting, retire into the northern fastnesses where no troops could follow them, have to end in the militia occupying the country until the rebellious tribes are starved into submission. Meanwhile General Strange is descending the North Saskatchewan from Edmonton towards Fort Pitt, while the victory at Batoche will probably release most of General Middleton's column, as well as the Mounted Police at Prince Albert, to reinforce Col. Otter at Battleford.

Does it not seem unfair that so many remarks upon the action—or rather inaction—of the Mounted Police in question should be appearing in the press, when there is absolutely no evidence on which to base a judgment. This force has hitherto maintained the confidence of the settlers, who should be best qualified to judge of their capability, and the officers at Prince Albert have the best of records, and these facts alone should lead us to expect that good reasons for the course pursued will be shown. In any case, as has already been remarked, there is no evidence, as yet, to show that the reasons for their action were not sufficient.

Not only has the proportion of arms of precision amongst the half-breed insurgents been overestimated, but the skill of these frontiersmen with the rifle has been greatly exaggerated. Any yarns that may have been told respecting half-breeds making up bags of prairie hens by shooting their heads off at a hundred yards, or killing deer or buffalo at a gallop at four or five hundred yards may be promptly categorized as drafts on the imagination. There are so many experienced shots amongst us who know the impossibility of keeping inside an eight-inch circle at 200 yards, and the facility with which a six-foot square target may be missed at five or six hundred yards, even with the best arms, and under a conjunction of favorable circumstances such as could not possibly occur in hunting, that it seems incredible how such absurd stories could gain currency. As a matter of fact the plain hunters are very good shots, but most of their hunting is done at short ranges, seldom, if ever, reaching 200 yards, or exceeding the distance at which buckshot will take effect, and their experience in allowing for the motion of their target will be found to be restricted to some such limited range. Under these circumstances it is evident that facility for reloading to allow of a succession of rapid shots in case of failure at first would be a greater desideratum with them than extension of range, and we consequently find repeating rifles in general demand with them, and now held in respectful and even awful dread by their enemies.

The average repeating rifle cannot compare in accuracy and range with even the well-abused Snider, but it is evidently held in high esteem by our scouts, as well as the half-breeds, and it becomes a ques-