

# THE CANADIAN MILITIA GAZETTE

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### MISCELLANEOUS.

## Topics of the Week.

We are requested to announce that persons desirous of engaging as register keepers for the prize meeting of the Dominion Rifle Association should make application in writing to the Secretary, Lieut.-Col. Bacon, Militia Department, Ottawa.

In mentioning last week General Middleton's return to the Capital, his visit to the Eastern Provinces was inadvertently characterized as a "holiday trip." It is eminently fashionable at this season of the year to be holiday making down by the sea, but as those will know who have noticed the reports of his operations which have appeared in this paper, the General has chosen to be out of the fashion, and has given himself up to work rather than play. His inspections of the district camps in Quebec and New Brunswick, and of the infantry schools at St. Johns and Fredericton, have been of the most thorough character, and the drill all ranks have been called upon to exhibit has been altogether practical, without any encouragement of the fancy operations very often indulged in—to the exclusion of everything else—for the delectation of inspecting officers.

Revolver shooting was for the first time introduced by the staff officers of the Second Brigade, Massachusetts Volunteer Militia, at the annual encampment at South Framingham last month. The arm has not been officially adopted by the State but it is generally believed that it will soon be and required as a part of an officer's equipment. Many of the volunteers anticipating this have equipped themselves, and in a brief time become wonderfully proficient in the use of the weapon. Noting this movement, *Shooting and Fishing* says: "Officers are supposed to be the superiors of privates in point of military knowledge and are selected for their efficiency in most States. In engagements they are more the object of attack than privates, and their loss is supposed to be greater than those from the rank, but with all this they have nothing at the present time to protect themselves but an ornament known as a sword which is as harmless as a riding whip. Officers should be equipped with revolvers and taught how to use them skilfully. They will probably be issued in Massachusetts within a year and with a few months' practice many will be able to handle this greatest of modern fire arms with skill equal to the best known."

The riflemen of Ottawa are fortunate in the interest which their skill at arms has aroused amongst leading citizens, and the practical and

generous manner in which that interest is manifested. The latest evidence is a cable despatch received by Mr. G. B. Pattee, president of the Metropolitan Rifle Association, from the Mayor of Ottawa, Mr. McLeod Stewart, now in London, announcing that His Worship is sending out a cup for competition at the association prize meeting. Mayor Stewart made a similar gift last year. The cup then presented was won and is held for the year by Lieut. H. H. Gray, of the Guards, and we would not be surprised to learn that the fact of his meeting the holder in this year's Canadian camp at Wimbledon brought the Mayor's thoughts back to his friends the riflemen of Ottawa, and caused him to repeat the gift. Mr. Pattee, president of the Metropolitan, and a liberal annual subscriber, has just given \$75 towards the prize list for this year. The matches take place on the 24th and 25th August.

"The new French infantry regulations have seen the light, but ours will be for some time delayed," says a London correspondent of the *New York Times*. "The Gauls have drawn a proper distinction between an attacking, and what may be called an 'edging' movement, the latter being intended to push an enemy back, so to say, by inches here and there. But when we read that a charge is to be executed in close formation, and that this formation will reserve fire until it gets within 350 yards of an enemy, with then advance rapidly, firing every seven or eight paces, and stopping neither to load nor to take aim, astonishment attains to the proportions of incredulity. Where, we may ask, would the dense formation be before it got within 350 yards of an enemy armed with magazine rifles and machine guns? The one thing that would be dense about it, besides the stupidity of its commander, would be the array of corpses, and they would certainly neither load nor take aim. 'A charge executed with violence and *sans merci*' will never take place in civilized warfare again, except at night, and if the French believe it will we cannot think much of their chances in the great tribulation that is coming. 'Dispersed order is condemned.' Very well. If the French want several St. Privats on their own account let them condemn it by all means. But, perhaps, when they get under fire, the battalion commanders will prove a little wiser than the drill book compilers."

The cumbersome if imposing bearskin will, it is threatened, ere long cease to adorn the heads of the British Guardsmen. The Imperial army estimates committee have, it appears, taken exception to the cost of these articles, which, owing to a decrease in the supply of good skins, has risen to the surprising figure of £7 5s. a cap. The *Broad Arrow* protests against their replacement by inexpensive helmets. "The bearskins," says that influential organ, "are costly, and unprejudiced people might regard them as unsightly and unsoldierly. But they are a speciality of the Guardsmen, and to replace them by the more sensible infantry helmet would be considered an outrage on the most sacred traditions of the brigade. The change would no doubt be a most legitimate economy, but the government, if it wishes to maintain the strength of the army, with the present rate of wages it pays the soldier, must not meddle with sentiment. We ourselves, for instance, with the report of Lord