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THE CANADIAN

Military Gazette

Successor to the Canadian Militia Gazette.

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MONTREAL, MARCH 15, 1895.

Notes and Comments

One of the Ottawa press correspondents announces that one of the objects of Major General Herbert's visit to England is to consult the contractors who were to supply the Dominion with the Martini-Metford rifle. What about, is the question which naturally arises, and echo answers what? This suspense about the new rifle is becoming painful and the public and the force really ought to know what is the present position of affairs. The opinion of most experts who have seen and used the rifle is that it is a first rate weapon, but for its extreme weight, and that could easily be remedied, for it is now pretty clearly establish-

ed that the extra weight as compared with the Lee-Metford is due to the necessity of making the barrel larger to fit the old Martini-Henry stocks for the sake of saving a dollar and a half a rifle for new stocks. Talk about putting the cart before the horse and of penny-wise-and-pound-foolish policies after that!

There is no doubt about it, there is only one course open now, the appointment of a small arms committee to report upon the rifle, and that step should have been taken at the very first.

It is perhaps too much to hope that the government will give rein to its generosity sufficiently to re-arm the field artillery at the same time as the infantry is being provided with a new rifle, but the government might do worse than appoint at once an expert committee to take the question of artillery re-armorment into consideration. Our muzzle loading nine-pounders, like stage coaches and blunderbusses, were all very well in their time, but are obsolete now.

Every English service paper one gets old of nowadays contains more or less numerous accounts of ceremonies in connection with the distribution of the long service medal to English volunteers. It was stated on the floor of the Imperial House of Commons that similar medals were to be distributed among the Canadian militia, but they have not materialized yet. The veterans of our force are almost beginning to doubt that there is a chance of ever seeing them.

Is the same cheerful round of

squad and arm drill going to be the programme for this season's annual drill? It is to be presumed so, considering that the drills, so far as the city corps are concerned, are beginning, and no further orders for the year have been issued. No one will deny the paramount importance of squad, arm and company drill, but we submit that this elementary work can be carried out to a point of tediousness which is likely to take away much of the attraction from soldiering. We certainly think that it is time that in the efficiency returns some credit should be given for battalion drill.

The regimental rifle association throughout the Dominion are meeting and considering the season's campaign at the ranges. It is sincerely to be hoped that more attention will be given to the nursery and second class shots than in the past. No regiment can hope to make a record for itself at the ranges without it does this. Every regiment in the country can take an example from the Thirteenth of Hamilton in this respect. It is to be hoped also that this summer will see a skirmishing or judging distance match on every programme.

We have received several communications on our remarks about the importance of practical field training for our city battalions. All the writers agree upon the necessity of field manoeuvres of some kind, but all appear to object to the expense being thrown upon the battalions participating. We certainly think that the Militia Department should assist the battalions to take part in at least a couple of field days