

Militia and Defence.

FIELD ARTILLERY GUNS AND EQUIPMENT.

It is hoped that the new guns will shortly arrive, but it will be necessary to bear in mind that the arrival of these, and the change of establishment from 4 to 6 guns per battery will entail increased gun-shed accommodation.

It must also be borne in mind that the purchase of these six batteries of modern breech loading guns means the deliberate adoption of the principle that the field artillery is to be re-armed as well as the infantry. The new batteries will suffice to arm about "one-third" of the field artillery.

It will be disastrous to call a halt half way through the work, and it must be definitely held in view that the whole of the field artillery should receive new guns as soon as possible.

I have no hesitation in saying that the efficiency which they have maintained entitles them to demand this. The present muzzle-loading guns which will be discarded can be advantageously used for other definite purposes of less importance.

RIFLE RANGES.

The adoption of the new rifle has largely increased the difficulty of finding suitable ranges.

While the distance to which the Lee-Enfield throws its bullet is not largely superior to that of the Martini, yet its penetration is so much greater that far more protection is required in marker's butts, and in the thickness in stop-butts.

This matter is under careful consideration, especially as regards the more important ranges of the country. A new range is greatly needed at Ottawa.

The ranges at London, Kingston and Toronto are already safe. The other main ranges can, and must, be made so.

At the same time I do not propose to cause the distances at which shooting takes place to be increased.

The shooting of the militia as a whole is not yet what it should be, I can see no object in practising firing at long ranges, until satisfactory results are obtained at the shorter ones.

CLOTHING AND EQUIPMENT.

Great consideration has been given during the past year to the whole subject of clothing and equipment, and I look forward to very great improvements in the whole system. A serviceable equipment is still one of our greatest needs. Saddlery is in a very defective condition: much of that in hand is worn out, and there is no reserve whatever. As regards clothing, many great improvements have already taken place, and I trust to improve still further. New patterns, all in practical conformity with those used in the Imperial Service, have been adopted, and greater uniformity leading to economy has been secured. Sealed patterns have been carefully revised, and a better system of inspection adopted so as to secure that the contracts come up in all respects to the sealed patterns.

A large quantity of serge clothing has been ordered, and regiments have been encouraged to substitute serge jackets for cloth tunics: the former being more serviceable, better wearing and cost less. It is hoped that should the proposals already made with regard to the measures necessary for the proper care of the new rifle be carried out, that the same system may be extended to the care of clothing, in which case I am confident that not only will clothing last longer, but it will be kept in better condition than at present.

BARRACKS.

There is no change in the amount of accommodation from that available last year. The votes for necessary repairs and new constructions have for the last year or two been seriously curtailed, with the result that the expenditure of a considerably