

Irving, seconded by Sergt. Winsby, and the secretary was instructed to forward it to the MILITIA GAZETTE. No one will dispute the contention of the preamble, nor would anyone be disposed to object to having the contests take place on a neutral range provided such range were available. In the meantime the Rideau range comes as near as possible to meeting this requirement. The total number of competitors at last year's meeting was upwards of 360; of these about fifty were from Ottawa or its immediate vicinity, and had whatever advantage arises from familiarity with the range. To the remaining three hundred odd the range was neutral, and we fail to see how it is possible to make a more equitable arrangement, unless in order to minimize a trifling advantage at best the Dominion Association should adopt the rather expensive expedient of equipping and maintaining a range to be used only for the annual Dominion competitions.

FRIENDS of the Royal Military College are too apt when advocating the claims of graduates to preferment for commissions in the permanent corps, to overlook altogether the fact that militia officers are also entitled to some consideration. There are many men in the militia service who have not had the opportunity of attending the college, but who are eminently qualified for positions in the permanent service. It is no disparagement of the Royal Military College to say that it is quite possible for an officer not a graduate, but who has educated himself by practical experience in the militia and by courses at the schools, to prove a much more desirable acquisition to the permanent corps than a graduate who has had none but college experience. By all means let qualifications count above everything else in making selections for these appointments, but don't bar any deserving applicant because he has not in his boyhood days been able to avail himself of the military college course.

EASTER falling early this year, the weather to a certain extent marred the operations of the English volunteers in their annual manoeuvres. The operations this year extended over a wide area but the chief centres of interest were Dover, Portsmouth, Eastbourne and Aldershot; whilst in the North a respectable force of Liverpool volunteers took the field. At Portsmouth the navy co-operated in an attack upon the eastern defences of the southern military post, and were held by the umpires to have made good their descent. A staff officer attached to the Dover force, who furnishes his observations to the *Army and Navy Gazette*, says: "Errors were committed in the field on Monday, and some very silly mistakes too; but I have seen line commanding officers commit similar blunders, and not always display the same good feeling when called upon to correct them. There exists, I regret to say, a good deal of small-mindedness among professional soldiers. They do not at all times appreciate as thoroughly as they should do our wants and requirements as a nation, and among some there is a sort of idea that their rights are being usurped by the auxiliary forces. From all I have seen of the volunteers, I feel sure that it is not their wish to usurp any rights of the soldier, but rather to accept him as a model, and approach as near as they can to his standard of efficiency."

THERE are two reports concerning the retirement of the Negus of Abyssinia from in front of the position of the Italians. The story he tells his own people is that he has concluded a peace with the Italians, having accepted an offer of ten cannons, a thousand rifles, and all the money in the Italian treasury at Massowah. As he has a following of 70,000 or 80,000 men there are suggestions that he is simply biding his opportunity. The Italians have certainly won no laurels in Abyssinia, and, as the *Army and Navy Gazette* shows, the result of their experience is to demonstrate that the principle which should guide a

commander engaged in such an enterprise should always be to see that his organization is complete before advancing, then press on, and having come face to face with his opponents, strike decisively. It has been by the adoption of these tactics that Lord Wolseley has been invariably successful. "It is a pity," it adds, "for the Italians that their commander at Massowah has not had some of the dash and some of the perspicacity of Lord Wolseley. Had he possessed his lordship's qualities as a commander, his army would not have occupied the rather unpleasant, not to say ridiculous, position it does to-day in Abyssinia."

### An Instructional Battalion.

WE fear that this is not a favourable moment for recommending any extension of military education. The strong opinions that have lately been expressed by high authorities on the useless extravagance of maintaining such places as Woolwich, Sandhurst, and the Army Medical School naturally make us diffident in advocating anything in the shape of military instruction. Still there is a good deal to be said in favour of military education, and there are some persons left who see advantage in giving our officers and soldiers opportunities of becoming acquainted with the technicalities of their profession. We should like to see an infantry school of instruction created at Aldershot. It will be said that Aldershot is already such a school of instruction as we require. So it is to a certain extent, but hardly as efficient a one as we should like to see. The infantry regiments composing the division at Aldershot are of varying strength and quality, they have to take their share of all guards, fatigues, and other duties, and this makes a great demand on their effective strength, so that it is rare that a battalion can parade much more than half its number. We should like to see an infantry instructional battalion created at Aldershot some 1000 or 1200 strong, by detaching officers, non-commissioned officers and men from every infantry regiment in the United Kingdom. For the command of such a battalion we would select the best officers we could find, to hold the posts of commanding officer, second in command, and adjutant, and we would have a staff of a sergeant-major and a certain number of drill sergeants. This year might be divided into two courses of five months each, with intervening vacations of one month for the benefit of the staff. During the five months the instructional battalion would go through a complete course of infantry drill, field firing, and shelter-trench exercise in so thorough a way that the officers, non-commissioned officers and men who have been through it might be qualified to impart their knowledge to others when they return to their regiments. The officers should be the adjutants of the future, and the non-commissioned officers and men the drill instructors. To such a battalion as this should be permitted experiments of all kinds in infantry drill and the most suitable forms of attack and defence. And in order that it might devote itself to instruction, it might be free from all camp duties. The officers of the Auxiliary Forces who have to go through a course of instruction might also be sent to it. The great difficulty under the modern system of short service is to obtain thoroughly trained non-commissioned officers, and in Continental Armies special value is attached to schools of instruction. We believe the additional cost of an infantry instructional battalion would not be great. The pay of the permanent staff and the travelling expenses of the different detachments would be the whole of it. And we think the command of such a battalion would be an object of ambition to the smartest infantry commanding officer. Say that there are 60 battalions of infantry on the home establishment, we might take 30 at a time and from each detach 1 officer, 2 sergts., and 30 rank and file. This would give a very effective battalion, nearly 1000 strong of all ranks. All the latest developments of infantry drill might be thoroughly investigated and tested, and the presence of such a battalion in camp would be a model to all the others. The Guards have deservedly earned a high reputation for the excellence of their drill and the good qualities of their non-commissioned officers, and there is no doubt as to the great value of their school instruction in London for officers of the Auxiliary Forces. We think that the creation of an instructional infantry battalion at Aldershot would be a very good move for the Service and become a standard of drill for the whole Army.—*Broad Arrow*.

The Austrian *Army Gazette* announces that the Emperor, in order to give the infantry, as the principal arm of the Imperial forces, a proof of his especial care, has created the post of Inspector-General of Infantry, and appointed the Crown Prince Rudolph to fill it.

The authorities of Peking have recently taken a census of the Celestial Empire. The figures returned by the village bailiffs make the population 319,383,500, which, with estimates relating to five provinces omitted, makes an aggregate of about 392,000,000. These figures are independent of Corea, Thibet and Kashgar. As the population of India exceeds 250,000,000, the Hindoos and Chinese constitute more than half the whole human race.