

CAPT. KINNEAR, whose letter is published in another column, in calling attention to the non-observance of various excellent rules laid down for the D.R.A. meeting, only makes public what was very generally commented upon by the competitors on the range. The rules ignored as pointed out, no doubt should be strictly enforced so long as they remain embodied in the regulations for the meeting, but one great reason perhaps why many were not insisted upon by the officers whose duty it was to do so, was because the violation was so very general that none of the competitors were placed at an advantage or disadvantage in comparison with the others, and all seemed quite content to have things go on as they were. We do not by any means say this as justification for the neglect of those who should have seen that the rules were carried out and did not do so; but merely state what we believe to have been the real state of the case. Had any complaint been lodged, it would doubtless have received immediate attention. As to the markers and register keepers, it would be a very good idea if, as some one suggested at the competitors' meeting, they could be drilled in their duties before the meeting commences, but just how this is to be done has yet to be explained.

THE prize lists of the Ontario and Prince Edward Island rifle matches, published in this issue, make complete the record of this season's provincial annual meetings. These form a means of comparison between the shooting skill of the men from the different provinces, and the programme in each case, which will, no doubt, be availed of by many in the interval between this and the commencement of next season's shooting. The D.R.A. lists, to be published next week, will show how the pick of all the provinces compare at the great annual gathering.

THE militia general orders of the 16th July, published in this issue, show a net loss of three officers, there being six new appointments, and nine retirements chronicled from various causes. Of the appointments, one is to a captaincy from the retired list of lieutenants, and the other five are provisional.

Personal.

Sir A. P. Caron, Minister of Militia, arrived in Ottawa on Tuesday, on his return from England.

The commander-in-chief of the army of Madagascar was, not many years ago, a midshipman of the English navy.

Capt. Evans, adjutant of the 43rd Batt., and Major Todd and Capt. Toller of the G.G.F.G., have gone from Ottawa to take a course at the Cavalry School, Quebec.

Major-General Middleton left Ottawa on Tuesday for Kingston. He will be absent for about two weeks, and before his return will inspect the district camps at Kingston and Niagara.

During the absence on leave of Lieut.-Colonel Houghton, D.A.G., Lieut.-Colonel Taylor of the School of Mounted Infantry will take charge of the Winnipeg district. Colonel Houghton is taking advantage of a month's leave of absence to pay a visit to the Pacific coast.

The Hamilton *Times* of the 28th ult. contains an interesting sketch of the military career of Lieut.-Col. Skinner, who, after a volunteer service of 31 years, has been placed upon the retired list, being succeeded in the command of the 13th Batt. by Lieut. Col. Gibson. From the *Times* article the following is condensed:—"On the first organization of the volunteer force in 1855, Colonel Skinner joined No. 2 Company, Hamilton, as a private, and remained in connection with the same until the formation of a Highland company, in 1856, to which he was appointed ensign. This company was subsequently disbanded. On the occurrence of the Trent affair he raised a new company of 65 men, to which he was gazetted captain, his brother being next in command. This company was clothed in full Highland dress at Captain Skinner's own expense. He remained in command of the Highland company until the formation of the 13th Batt. in 1862, to which he was appointed senior major, the late Hon. Isaac Buchanan being Lieut.-Colonel. In 1863 he commanded the battalion at Brantford, where

General Napier reviewed a force of 1,000 regulars, 2,300 volunteers and about 200 Indians. In 1866 Major Skinner was present with the battalion at the engagement with the Fenians at Limeridge, Colonel Booker being in command, he having been gazetted vice Colonel Buchanan, retired. Shortly after the return of the regiment to Hamilton, Major Skinner was gazetted lieut.-colonel. Having always taken the greatest interest in the education of the volunteers in the use of the rifle, he attended the first meeting held in Toronto to organize the Ontario rifle association, and for many years acted in an official capacity at its matches. He likewise attended with a team of twelve men at the first Dominion rifle match, held at Laprairie, where he was placed in command of the corps on duty during the meeting. In 1870, at the request of the Ontario rifle association, he undertook to organize a team of riflemen, and also to find the money requisite for the passage of the men to Wimbledon and return, and for their subsistence while there. This he succeeded in doing after about six months' hard work, having had to travel the length and breadth of Ontario three times in search of men and money. He took twenty-one men to Wimbledon, and being the first team that appeared there from any colony, it drew great attention to Canada, and did much good. He has been vice-president of the Ontario rifle association and member of the council of the Dominion association.

Sir Frederick Roberts on "Indulgences."

SIR FREDERICK ROBERTS has just issued a general order, which, could it be read by some of the departed heroes of the old school, would make those gallant martinets turn in their graves. He has actually advised commanding officers to look upon their men according to the advice tendered a couple of centuries ago by Matthew Prior:

"Be to their virtues very kind; be to their faults a little blind."

His Excellency states that he has been much struck by the frequent courts-martial on the younger soldiers of the British service, and by the disproportionate number of these lads to be met with in every military prison, and on inquiring into the causes which have brought the majority of these prisoners into trouble, he is unable to resist the impression that many of them might be doing their duty with credit in the ranks, "if more consideration had been shown to them in the earlier part of their career." In this brief opinion there is the wisdom of experience. When Sir Frederick Roberts was appointed to the chief command of the armies of India, there were detractors who urged that his want of regimental experience unfitted him for the rule of soldiers, whose habits, tastes, good points and weak ones he knew nothing personally about. He might be trusted to lead an army to victory in the field, but in the "cankering times of peace," his ignorance of interior regimental economy and discipline would be found to the detriment of the service and of his own reputation. Such was the opinion of some of the critics who then carped at his appointment. He has happily disappointed them all. Without any regimental experience, without the small experience even of commanding a battery in quarters, he has shown that he thoroughly understands those very questions of interior economy, the ignorance of which he was taunted with, and that his knowledge of soldier character is correct, even if it be only intuitive.

For many years there were only two ways of looking at that character. One was to consider the man who enlisted as a sort of wild beast that had been trapped, and had to be tamed by a never-ending iron discipline; the other was to treat him as a child, which must always be looked after by somebody else, and which was never to be trusted alone. The former method was in accordance with the views of the Duke of Wellington, who, in 1828, in a memorandum on the "Discipline of the Army," thus recorded his opinion: "The man who enlists in the British army is, in general, the most drunken, and probably the worst man of the village or town in which he lives. There is not one in a hundred of them who ought not to be put in the second or degraded class of any society or body into which they may be introduced; and they can be brought to be fit for what is called the first-class only by discipline and the precept and example of the old soldiers, who, if not themselves in that same second or degraded class, deserve to be placed there for some action or other twenty times in every week." This was the opinion held and acted upon by all the commanders who had served under the great duke, with the exceptions, perhaps, of Sir Charles Napier and Sir Colin Campbell whose known sympathies with the rank and file won to them the hearts of their soldiers. But even they held to a very tight rein of what was considered discipline, and would have looked upon Sir Frederick Roberts' method of holding the rein as loose in the extreme. The second way of treating the soldier, namely, as a child not to be trusted, was not much better than the more cruel one which preceded it. In both instances he was treated as a machine which was put through certain mechanical motions, and which had to adapt itself to certain rules and systems as fixed as the laws of the Medes and Persians. He