

gun, fired at fifty yards distance. As this marvellous weapon, at its greatest speed, sends 600 shots per minute from its single barrel, it follows that 150 little bullets at the most cut down a very substantial tree in a quarter of a minute! The effect of a Maxim, which can breach or utterly demolish brick walls in a few minutes, and before the fire from which strong doors or gateways would disappear almost as quickly as do the flimsy structures in a pantomime, can hardly be over-estimated; and its use must revolutionise, or at least modify, many of the hitherto generally accepted *maxims* of field fortification.

There is no part of a militiaman's duty which is more irksome and distasteful alike to officers, non-coms and men, than that which comes under the category of "aid to the civil powers" in case of riot. The *Army and Navy Gazette* has lately published some most interesting remarks on this very subject. Fortunately the occasions have been of late years few and far between when soldiers, either in England or Canada, have been called upon to strengthen the hands of the police; but it was not very long ago that attention was directed to the unsatisfactory condition of the law in England by circumstances which called forth an expression of opinion on the part of the London and provincial press. The outcome of the publicity which the matter then received was a series of questions in the House of Commons, and the ultimate appointment of a committee by the Home Secretary to advise him on certain points of difficulty. Of that committee Sir John Bridge was chosen chairman on account of his great experience as a police magistrate and recognized standing as a lawyer. Sir John Bridge had for his colleagues Sir Godfrey Lushington, Permanent Under-Secretary for the Home Department; Colonel Coleridge Grove, Assistant-Adjutant-General, Horse Guards; Lt.-Col. H. M. Moorsom, Chief Constable of the county of Lancaster; and Mr. J. L. Wharton, M.P., Chairman of the Quarter Sessions for Durham. It was the duty of this committee to inquire into "the precautions to be taken in case of riots or apprehended riots, and into the several and relative responsi-

bilities of the civil and military authorities in case of riot."

The committee sat last year, and its report has just been issued. There seems all through to have been a praiseworthy unanimity among the different members, for they were so fully in accord with regard to the various details brought before them that they did not deem it expedient to call any witnesses. In this they are to be congratulated, for when it is possible for them to do so it is far better for the members of a committee to make up their minds independent of outside expressions of opinion. As a rule witnesses bring all sorts of irrelevant matters forward to complicate those who have subsequently to weigh over the evidence, and the inquiry conducted by Sir John Bridge's committee was one of those in which no evidence was actually required. The army, therefore, will be in no way disappointed to find that this time the usual course was not had recourse to. It is laid down in the report as a fundamental principle that "the calling out of the military to aid in the suppression of rioting should never be resorted to except as a sort of supreme effort." This, of course, was well-known before, but it was desirable to have the fact emphasised, as it cannot be too often or too distinctly made known that there is a wide distinction between a soldier and a policeman, and that it is unfair to expect of the soldier that, in addition to his own particular duties, that he should be called upon to discharge those of the policeman, unless it be that the latter finds himself absolutely powerless to protect life and property. In those circumstances there are few soldiers who would not readily volunteer to come to the aid of the civil power, but no good and much harm would be done by if it became a practice to "call out the military" on every paltry pretext.

Sir John Bridge's committee has been well advised in placing it on record once again that, as far as possible, the civil powers should be taught to be self-reliant. As to the course of procedure when the services of the military are brought into requisition, the committee lay down some very sound and practi-

cal rules. It is stated that "a rota of justices, who should hold themselves in readiness to proceed with troops and prints of proclamation under the Riot Act, should always be kept." But before appealing to the General Officer Commanding the District for military aid it is the duty of the magistrates to satisfy themselves in consultation with their chief constable that all police augmentation which it is in his power to avail himself of has been exhausted. Then, and not until then, will the chief constable forward the requisition to the proper military authorities, stating the number and the composition of the troops which are required, and describing precisely the place to which they are to be sent. If the magistrate thinks, however, that the emergency is so pressing that a direct requisition to the military is imperative, he will be justified in "taking the law into his own hands" and calling for military assistance on his own responsibility.

We now come to that portion of the report which deals with the proper course of action to be pursued when the troops arrive on the scene of disturbance. This part is of great importance to all officers and non-commissioned officers. They might, any of them, find themselves called upon at any moment to give aid to the civil powers, and it behoves them to know what their duties and responsibilities are. The troops having arrived, the committee think "the magistrate should remain as near the commanding officer as possible," and in the event of a riot the proclamation should be read, and this should "operate as a distinct warning to the crowd that those not dispersing within an hour are guilty of felony." Under this heading the report says:—

"It must be clearly understood that to justify the exercise of military force in the prevention of serious outrages and damage to persons or property is not necessary to wait for the proclamation being read, much less to wait till one hour has expired after it has been read. The time when the proclamation was read should be carefully noted by the magistrate. If the magistrate comes to the conclusion that the police are unable to cope with the riot, and that the necessity of the case demands the interference of the military by action, then, whether the Riot Act has been read or not, it will be his duty at once to request the officer commanding the troops to take action. This request should be made distinctly and, if possible, in writing, although if given by word of mouth it will be suffi-