

THE CANADIAN MILITIA GAZETTE

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CORRESPONDENCE.

THE MILITIA GAZETTE aims at being the recognized medium of instruction and information for Canadian militiamen and rifle shots. Communications on the subjects to which its pages are devoted are respectfully invited. Anonymous communications will not be regarded. No name will be published, except with the writer's consent. The editors will not be responsible for the views of correspondents.

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Comment and Criticism.

THE annual general meeting of the Dominion rifle association will be held in the Railway committee room of the House of Commons at 11 a.m. on Wednesday, the 4th May, next; that of the Dominion artillery association at the same place and hour on the following day. Members, particularly those residing away from Ottawa, are particularly desired to attend, so as to make the meetings as representative as possible.

THE news from British Columbia in militia circles is encouraging, and everything seems to point to increased activity during the coming season. The several corps are improving very perceptibly, and many young fellows, whose families hitherto have shown the cold shoulder, are joining the force. The rifle match with a team from H.M.S. Cormorant, and the cricket match with the civilians, recorded elsewhere, speak well for the activity of the little force that forms the nucleus of a guard for our occidental portals.

IF it had not been put on record we could scarcely have conceived it possible that at this late day a town council in Ontario could have been found with so low an opinion of the militia force as that displayed by the Cobourg council last week, as described in our regimental notes. That a request for municipal help to procure helmets should have been met by general ridicule, and repeated with scarcely a dissenting voice, is not creditable to the intelligence of the Cobourg council. That body

would have been entirely within its rights in refusing to help its local militia force, but they at least deserve courteous treatment. The time has long since gone by when it was the fashion to laugh at the volunteer movement, and if we do not mistake the general sentiment of the country the Cobourg council will realize this at the next municipal election. They would have had plenty of precedents for entirely defraying the cost of helmets, and we could cite many poor parishes all over the Dominion that have thought enough of their home guard to do even more for them—to build armories and drill halls for their accommodation. In view of the way Colonel Rogers' letter was received we think Councillor Hewson deserves all praise for the moral courage he displayed in so fairly and moderately advocating the cause of the ridiculed militiamen.

IN consequence of some misunderstanding on the part of the Government printers the general orders which were intended to have been issued last week have been held over till next Saturday. They contain a long list of appointments and some new regulations, which have been alluded to in the *Mail*. We understand that there is every probability of another general order containing a great number of further appointments following within a week of that now delayed.

PROPOS of our remarks a couple of weeks ago on the Easter reviews in England and the personal item about Capt. Russell's carrier pigeons, we may draw attention to the fact that the War Office sanctioned the use of carrier pigeons in connection with the manoeuvres at Eastbourne. The birds were to be used so as to put to practical test the question as to how far they might be trusted in actual warfare. Not less than 1,000 birds had been secured for this purpose, and we hope that next week's English files will detail the result of this interesting experiment.

"FUSILIER'S" letter in this issue brings up a weak spot in our militia system that we have over and over again written about, but that we almost despair of ever seeing bettered. The firing of twenty rounds a year only, and that without any previous musketry instruction, is an absolute waste of time and ammunition, and is so acknowledged to be by everyone, we think, from the general commanding down. And yet with every year's annual training the same old farce is repeated. In the first place one instructor cannot teach a whole brigade how to shoot in twelve days, even though he should be a heaven-gifted imparter of knowledge, and have a sergeant as skilful as himself. Then comes the rule of moving a man back to a greater distance who has failed to hit the target at a shorter one, merely because he has fired a stated number of rounds, and the rules are cast iron and say he shall go back, and lastly, supposing a man has benefited by the few hurried hints he may have picked up, by the time he is beginning to find out how to fire a rifle his twenty rounds are exhausted, before he is yet sufficiently self-confident to be encouraged to further practice at his own expense and on his own account.