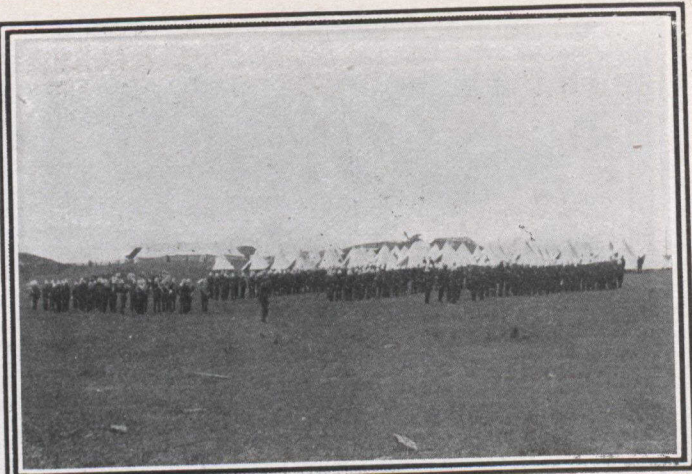




Call Parade for Divine Service.



Forming for Church Parade.

A Western Militia Camp

By BONNYCASTLE DALE

THE 5th British Columbia Regiment, Garrison Artillery, went into camp at Macaulay Point, a long, fairly level field that juts out into the straits of Juan de Fuca on the western side of the beautiful city of Victoria. Here are fine parade grounds, excellent open waters for heavy gun practice, adjacent woods for drum head service, fairly warm days, pleasant cool nights—everything that goes to make this Vancouver Island one of the most blessed spots on earth.

Organised as far back as 1883, this regiment shows the effect of careful handling. Satisfied men—that most necessary thing in the army—fill the companies. In conversation with many of them I learned of the pride they have in their companies, the generous rivalry between them. Nowhere have I seen a more representative class of young Canadians than in these ranks. They come from all classes of the citizens. Loyal they must be, for where is there a more loyal city in the Empire than this which guards the western coast of our wide Dominion?

It was on a Sunday that I accepted the invitation of Major Hibben to visit the camp. The night before the gunners had their first trials with the big guns in this sixteen days' camp. These 6-in. disappearing guns, using a hundred-pound shell containing 14 pounds 12 ounces of cordite, made the city shake perceptibly as they sent their missiles at the floating target. The results obtained were first class, as the moving targets in tow of a tug swept by at two miles distance. For the field guns, this distance was reduced to one mile at a stationary target. Here, again, these thirteen pounders made good scores. There are six of these in the battery, also six Maxims are attached. Remember many of these men work during the day and hasten out to this honorary militia work every evening.

From a commanding red rocky hill, so typical of the svenite formation at this end of Vancouver Island, we

could see the buglers in line, a moment more and the call "Parade for Divine service" swept out on the clear salt-flavoured air. Soon the three companies, under command of Col. Hall and staff, with the regimental band leading, were marching in perfect time to the grove, where the drum-head service, Rev. W. W. Boulton as chaplain attached, was held. Where is there a more beautiful sight in all this wide world than a detachment of the soldiers of the sword intently listening to a soldier of the cross? Here where the giant firs and the wind twisted gnarled oaks, the high growing ferns and ever present wild roses grew, the ancient service of the Church of England sounded sweet indeed—so would the service of any church that owns the same Captain as a leader, for this country of ours is very wide and tolerant in her religious beliefs. Back through the verdurous alleys the regiment marched, typical western men in a typical western scene.

Then came the annual muster parade, with 256 men in the ranks, Captain Williams of the regular force stationed at Esquimaux, inspecting. The companies marched in good time and step, their bearing was soldierly—as indeed it should be of men that have made the showing these men have in the Dominion competitions.

Later in the day a full guard of honour was furnished to receive His Imperial Highness, Prince Fushimi. Here, again, the excellent bearing of this western troop was seen. Do not fear, fellow Canadians, under such officers, with such manly big chaps in the ranks, with the full tide of loyalty bearing us on, with true Scotch and Irish and English parents, with an emigration of the same people pouring in here, people that in many cases have made their money in other parts of Canada and are coming to the best part to settle finally, but that these western military districts will turn out bodies of men that will be an ornament to us in these times of peace.



Drumhead Service.



Back through Verdurous Alleys.