

point of view, it is desirable that every young man should gain the physical and mental benefit of "citizen soldiering," and there is really no reason why the strength of the force should not be increased very considerably if it were judiciously nursed, given good uniforms and rifle ranges."

The "physical and mental benefit" resulting from the exercise and discipline inseparable from the drilling, occasional field-days, camp-life, and rifle shooting of the Canadian militiaman must be known to every one who has seen service with our citizen-soldiers, and, if these reports of the condition of the British volunteers continue to be heard, there will probably be an outbreak of indignation throughout the United Kingdom. The reference to the "unpicturesqueness" of the uniforms worn by the British volunteers might be made the means of recalling to the attention of the Militia Department of Canada the desirability of changing the uniforms worn by some of our citizen-soldiers for something more picturesque and distinctive than the close imitations of the garb worn by the

"thin red line of 'eroes"

pictured in Kipling's "Tommy."

During the Queen's Jubilee some of the Canadian troops present thereat were not distinguishable from the infantry, artillery and cavalry of the British regulars, and while, during the stay of the colonials in London, the Australians and other visiting volunteers from abroad were easily recognized by their picturesque costumes, the Canadians, when parading in full kit, missed much of the special attention showered upon their fellow-colonists. Rifle ranges are absolutely necessary if the volunteer is to be made a creditable marksman, but attractive uniforms are also, it seems, desirable; and if, instead of the close fitting tunics now worn, some of the Canadian regiments were permitted to wear loose serviceable homespun blouses and knickerbockers, with scarlet or blue facings and buff leather belts and gaiters, a recruit, with an eye for the artistic, and a wish to appear to advantage in future processions illustrating the strength of the Empire, would be attracted by the thoroughly Canadian character of his clothing.

That the recruiting sergeant often captures soldiers for the Queen by the splendour and brilliancy of his trappings is evident. The ordinary Britisher rather revels in martial display, and in this particular is unlike the regimental *bhisti* in India - of whom 'tis written:—

*The uniform 'e wore
Was nothin' much before,
An' rather less than 'arf o' that be'ind,
For a twisty piece o' rag,
An' a goatskin water-bag,
Was all the field-equipment 'e could find.*

A CONSOLIDATION OF BANKING INTERESTS.

Time and competition may yet bring about a movement in Canada similar to that which has resulted in the fusion of the capital and business interests of so many of the monetary and mercantile houses of Great

Britain. One of the most prominent bank officials in the Dominion when recently asked as to the prospects of amalgamating some of the Canadian banks expressed the opinion that the process of absorption or amalgamation to which so much attention is being given in Britain will not commence in Canada, unless a period of depression attended by heavy financial reverses should arrive to cause shareholders to seek safety in union. However, everything points to an early awakening of interest in the direction referred to, and the rumour of negotiations now pending at Toronto, for the consolidation of two chartered banks and several insurance companies, may be the means of directing public attention to the wisdom which dictates such a step. It was openly admitted at the recent meeting of the Canadian Bankers' Association that banking facilities are in some districts too great for the legitimate requirements of the community, and the journal of the same association has also informed its readers that so keen is the competition for business in some towns that accounts are changed from one bank to another "simply because of personal preference for a certain manager." Of course, the bankers who moralize about, and then indulge in the folly of opening offices in towns already occupied by other banks, know what they are talking about; they have that experience which teaches, and they need no advice from the press, financial or otherwise, as to the course to pursue. Canada has good reason to be proud of a banking system which has so materially assisted in the development and progress of the country. No matter how remote or wild the territory to be opened up by miners and explorers, we hear of expeditions being fitted out by our enterprising banks to occupy the land. But this very energetic search for business, and the increasing difficulty of earning dividends on capital (and the interest paid for deposits) has brought about the very unwise competition to which such frequent allusions are made at Association meetings, and in the annual addresses of bank managers. That amalgamation is regarded as a relief from the ever-increasing pressure of competition is shown by what is transpiring in the United Kingdom, and the rumoured blending of the business of two Canadian banks having some sixty branches is only the beginning of what must take place sooner or later in this Dominion.

The advantages of a consolidation of interests must be apparent to the banks now in treaty, and it is to be hoped that, if the two banks concerned succeed in agreeing upon terms of union, shareholders in other institutions may be led to study the question of amalgamation and its effect upon their interests. Suggestions for amalgamation must, as a rule, emanate from shareholders. Bank presidents and directors, for many reasons, are not likely to propose that which may result in the absorption of the institutions they govern.

Yet negotiations for the purposes of amalgamation would be far more likely to succeed in prosperous