

Donaldson, Secretary D.A.A., whose gazette as honorary captain is amended by giving him substantive rank. Col. Macdonald and Capt. Perley have been on the active list all along, and we think it no more than just that the other officers named should enjoy the same privilege. Col. Gzowski and Lieut.-Col. Macpherson's names should, it appears to us, have been added to the list, for, although they are borne on the active strength, the reasons for it should be explicitly given.

Passing on to the ordinary appointments to the active force we find matters continuing to improve. There are five promotions, eleven new appointments, all provisional, and seven retirements, leaving a net gain of four officers. Eight officers are also confirmed in their respective ranks. Considerable changes occur in the arrangement of the companies of the neighboring battalions of Simcoo and Peel, the former relinquishing some of its southernmost companies to the latter, and both consolidating into eight company battalions. By these and a recent change the companies at Ivy, Elba and Tullamore are broken up, while Col. O'Brien establishes new companies at Jarrett's Corners and Huntsville, farther to the north.

We are delighted to welcome into the active service force the two provisional battalions of Infantry organized in Winnipeg and sent to the front last year. Col. Smith's regiment becomes the 91st Winnipeg Battalion of Light Infantry, and Col. Scott's the 95th Winnipeg Battalion of Infantry, and by their incorporation as eight company battalions, we gain at once sixty officers and two efficient corps. The wisdom of increasing the force in Manitoba is unquestionable, and we now hope to see that policy followed up by the organization of independent companies at points farther west. Both battalions seem to have at present the regimental system of promotion; we do not quite see how that can be followed in the case of the 95th, which has companies at Emerson and Brandon we know, and we think other rural companies.

The officers of the New Brunswick provisional battalion are still vainly asking *why* they have not yet received their field allowances for turning out last spring, as have all other corps similarly situated.

GENERAL MIDDLETON'S ANNUAL REPORT.

Major-General Middleton's annual report contains many valuable suggestions that we should like to see adopted. Amongst others he recommends that all officers of the permanent militia force shall rank senior to other militia officers of their own rank, in accordance with Imperial regulations on that point; that the time allowed for camping should be increased to fifteen days; that all the old knapsacks be withdrawn, and the valise equipment alone be used; that some sort of light patrol jacket, such as was sent to the North-west by the ladies of Ontario and Quebec, would be of great use to the men in camp, saving their tunics, which are much dirtied and injured by fatigue work; that boots and spurs be supplied to the cavalry; that more encouragement be given to the engineer branch of the force; that the strength of the force should be reduced and rural battalions drilled every year; that the Snider rifle should be changed for the Martini, &c. Sir Frederick also comments severely upon the objectionable appearance presented by militiamen walking about the streets, some with half uniform and half plain clothes; some with coats open, helmets on the back of their heads, smoking pipes, &c., which for the credit of the force should be prevented.

We heartily agree with his suggestion that more ammunition should be granted yearly, and that regiments should be encouraged and helped, if necessary, in procuring Morris' tubes for practising firing in the winter. We confess, however, that he strikes a blow at our own pet views when he says: "The so-called good shots are artificially trained and fire under such exceptional advantages at fixed targets, much larger than the body of a man, and at known distances, that when brought into the field to fire at moving men, at unknown distances, who also fire back at them, their good shooting often ceases. I know it is said that it must be an advantage for the soldier to be a

good shot at a standing target. This I admit, but in the field he now has to commence, for the first time, to fire at a moving target, &c., and a man with a good eye and a steady hand and nerve, who has, perhaps, never fired a shot, will pick it up nearly as quickly as the other, who has been undergoing an expensive training which proves useless at the time of need. This I found to be very much the case in the North-west the other day, and have noticed it in other campaigns." Anything coming from an officer of such long and varied experience as Sir Frederick Middleton must carry with it great weight, but our own experience at the butts had brought us to a very different conclusion. We have a vivid recollection of the same views being expressed some years ago by the officer commanding the Governor General's Foot Guards, who, to prove that he was right, put up a prize to be competed for by the best shots of his regiment and a number of ordinary rank and file, the conditions being ten rounds at unknown distances, limited time, a target for each competitor, sometimes in quick time, and sometimes in double time. The result was that the shooting men put on from seven to nine hits each, while of the others only one or two were able to find the target at all. We are of opinion that in rifle shooting, as in all other things, great experience is necessary, and that a man must not only understand all about his rifle and its powers, but hand and eye must be taught to work together. If any one doubts this, let him try the simple test of firing off the left shoulder. His eye will be as good and his nerve as steady as when firing from the right shoulder, but the results will be astonishingly different.

It is a curious coincidence that General Sir Gerald Graham should have expressed views similar to those of Sir Frederick Middleton, in a paper read a short time ago at the Royal United Service Institution. Referring to which the *Volunteer Service Review* says: "We would ask, is a man who *cannot* make good practice at a fixed target, in cool blood, likely to do better in time of action than one who can? What can such arguments as these mean, except that men should be taught to hit a living object before they can hit a fixed one. The average linesman of to-day can no more raise the Martini-Henry rifle rapidly to his shoulder, and hold it in firmly, than he can play the organ. What actually does happen when private Jones wants to let off his gun quickly? He brings it up smartly to his shoulder, from which the heel of the butt promptly slips down. He rapidly, as he thinks, aligns his sights, and in doing so covers the object aimed at, not merely with the foresight but with the whole muzzle. Bang! goes the gun with a vigorous wrench on the trigger, which jerks the muzzle higher still, and the bullet proceeds to the moon. The British soldier shooting 'at large' is an awesome sight, but when his generals think he can shoot with the rifle that is given him, and with the limited amount of practice he gets, he is not to be blamed so much as those who ought to know better."

A correspondent writing to the *Volunteer Record* thus gives his view of the case: "As a child must learn to walk before it can run, so a recruit must know how to hit what is fixed and at a known distance, before he can make good practice on targets whose motion requires allowance, and whose distance requires calculation, in addition to the knowledge and manipulation necessary for the easier form of practice. So it is evident that the best shot under ordinary circumstances will, *ceteris paribus*, remain the best shot at moving objects, because he has least to learn beyond what he already knows, while certainly the man whose nerves have been trained to stand the test of the excitement of prize shooting, is less likely than another to be rendered useless in action by excitement at a critical moment. And when men talk of the wonderful shooting of Boers or of Tyrolese, it must not be forgotten that with them rifle shooting is a continual occupation from the time when, as children, they first fire at some fixed mark."

A careful examination of the whole of Sir Frederick's report rather leads us to the belief that he does not quite mean what the sentence we have quoted would appear to convey, and that, as he is speaking of the rifle associations, the words "artificially trained" must refer to the paints, vorniers, wind-gauges, etc., used by competitors. Otherwise, if he believed that an untrained man, with a good eye and steady nerve, was as good as a man trained at fixed targets and known distances, he would not condemn the present system of rifle instruction, advocate the sending of Canadian officers to the School of Musketry at Hythe, declare the present course of rifle instruction only fit for recruits, and that trained soldiers should have a more practical one; and recommend the use of Morris' tubes for practising firing in the winter time. His views respecting revolver shooting are thus pointedly put. "To shoot well with a revolver requires a great deal of practice, and if a man cannot shoot well with it, it is worse than useless to encumber him with a weapon he cannot avail himself of." This is good sound sense, and substituting "rifle" for "revolver" expresses our own views on the subject of rifle shooting.