

THE CANADIAN MILITIA GAZETTE

A Weekly Journal devoted to the Interests of the Active Force of the Dominion.

Second Year.
VOL. II, No. 91.

OTTAWA, THURSDAY, 14th APRIL, 1887.

\$1.50 per annum in advance.
Single Copies Five Cents

CORRESPONDENCE.

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Should be made by Registered Letter, Post Office Order or Draft. For Great Britain, each dollar may be taken as equivalent to 4s., and cents as half-pence. All communications must be addressed to

THE CANADIAN MILITIA GAZETTE,
Box 316, OTTAWA, Canada.

Printed by MASON & REYNOLDS, 45 Elgin Street, Ottawa.

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Comment and Criticism.

WE are requested to remind the members that the annual general meeting of the Dominion Rifle Association will be held at 11 a.m. on the 4th May next, in the Railway Committee room of the House of Commons, and the annual meeting of the Dominion Artillery Association in the same place at the same hour on the following day. It is to be hoped that in each case there may be a very large attendance of members, for nothing is so well calculated to give a season's work a good start as a representative and enthusiastic meeting, while conversely nothing is surer to depress a council than a sparse attendance with only routine business transacted.

IN justice to some commanding officers, especially in the artillery branch of the service, it is again necessary for us to explain that the dates given in the militia list, and in our synopsis of it published last week, as those when command was assumed, are misleading. Take as an example the case of Lieut.-Col. John Gray, M.P.P., commanding the Toronto field battery. The militia list says he became major commanding on the 31st May, 1883, while everybody knows he has commanded the battery since 1870. It will be remembered that in the latter year a general order made all battery commanders majors instead of captains as theretofore, which accounts for the discrepancy, but nevertheless we think it would have been well for the militia list to show in some way the true duration of the command, and we shall try to work it out for our readers.

A VERY strong and persistent effort is being made in England to have the Wimbledon competitions opened to retired as well as active volunteers, but so far any motion with that object in view has been not only discouraged by the N. R. A. council, but voted down by the members. A similar motion has been brought up in our Dominion association time and again, that is, for the admission of retired n.c.o's and men, for the rules admit to the military matches officers who have retired retaining their rank. There is much to be said on both sides of the question. On the one hand it would be an advantage to have as large a representation as possible attend the matches, and those who have served the country for a long period are deserving of some recognition, whether they held commissions or no; on the other hand the admission of retired men would undoubtedly have the immediate effect of removing from the active force a large number of efficient men. We have no doubt that the movement inaugurated in England will have the effect of reviving the same proposition here.

ANOTHER matter just now agitating our English confrères is the advisability of awarding medals for twenty years' uninterrupted volunteer service, a proposition very like one which was sometime ago made in our correspondence columns, where it was suggested that advantage should be taken of the jubilee year to issue medals to all who had been in our militia force since it was reorganized by Sir George Cartier in 1868, and that medals should hereafter be awarded to all those completing eighteen years' service. While we are strongly opposed to the cheapening of decorations by making them common, we do think that some means should be devised for indicating long and meritorious service in the ranks. It would have an undoubted effect in increasing the efficiency of the force and in inducing long periods of service. In the English volunteer force stars are given, to be worn on the arm, in the Imperial service chevrons are likewise worn, which carry extra pay with them. At one time the same system of chevrons for time service was in vogue in Canada, but if it still remains in the R. & O. '83, of which we are not sure, it has fallen into disuse. We are strongly of opinion that some method of indicating prolonged good service would have an encouraging effect upon the men of the active force. It would be soon enough to discuss the question of medals when the principle was conceded.

THE Dominion Legislature was opened yesterday, when the House of Commons elected as its speaker for the present Parliament Lieut.-Col. J. Alderic Ouimet, member for Laval. The new speaker will be best known to our readers as the commanding officer of the Sixty-Fifth Mount Royal Rifles, which acquitted itself so well in the North-West in 1885, and as Chairman of the Council of the Dominion Rifle Association, which important appointment he has held for the last three years. We congratulate Col. Ouimet, as well as the militia force and the Dominion Rifle Association on the felicity with which the House has chosen a worthy successor to Col. Kirkpatrick, who filled the office so acceptably last Parliament.