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THE CANADIAN MILITIA GAZETTE, P. O. Box 316, Ottawa, Ont.

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Topics of the Week.

A bill introduced by Mr. Mulock in the House of Commons this week, provides that for the future Canadian officers shall be eligible for the command of the militia, a post now reserved by law for officers of the Imperial Army. The bill being simply permissive, the first reading was not opposed, Sir Adolphe Caron stating that its subject would receive the attention of the Government during the recess. It is not probable, as the session is so near its close, that the bill will be pressed further. It is not to be expected, whatever may become of the bill, that Canada will be in any hurry to depart from the present advantageous system of securing every five years, for the command of her militia, an officer fresh from that great centre of military knowledge and experience, the British Army.

The Royal Military College Board of Visitors has been practically dead for a great many years, and now it is announced that no revival may be expected. Questioned by Col. Denison in the Commons the other day, Sir Adolphe Caron said that the last inspection made was on the 18th October, 1881. It has not been deemed necessary since to continue the inspections. Everything connected with the college passes through the hands of the President of the Board, who is also the Adjutant-General of the forces; and the General Officer Commanding also makes periodical and minute examinations of the Royal Military College.

Bremner's Furs.

Since the commencement of the agitation relative to Charles Bremner's claim for compensation for furs lost during the North-West Rebellion, there has been very widespread misrepresentation of General Middleton's part in the affair, and since the parliamentary committee appointed to investigate the matter has reported, which it did last week, the unwarranted abuse of the General has been resumed with fresh impetus. We say unwarranted, because this report, unanimously agreed to by the committee, completely exonerates General Middleton from the charge of intentional wrongdoing, finding as the fact that his action was

prompted by "an unfortunate misconception of his powers," though proceeding to state their opinion that "the appropriation of any portion of the property under such circumstances by General Middleton to his own use and to that of the members of his staff was highly improper." This finding will no doubt be very useful as a guide for officers charged in the future with the suppression of such disorders as occasioned the trip of General Middleton to the North-West. But as that officer had had some little experience of warfare before coming to Canada, and was tolerably familiar with the method followed in disposing of property of their friends the enemy confiscated by a victorious army, the impropriety of which the committee treat will scarcely weigh heavily on his conscience. It does not appear that the plaintiff Bremner would have been much better off had the General refrained from ordering a few small packages to be put up as mementoes of the interesting occasion; for the furs thus appropriated are said to have amounted to only one-eighth of the total deposited by Bremner at Battleford, and the other seven-eighths appear to have since vanished without leaving a trace behind. Those who are disposed to censure the General for not having adhered to the letter of the law should remember the circumstances of the case; that he was operating in a country where all but military law was suspended for the time being, and that the haste with which he had to move his force from place to place, through hundreds of miles of country inhabited only by hostile breeds and Indians, did not permit of as calm reflection upon nice points of law as might be indulged in by folk comfortably at home in old Canada years after the North-West disturbance had been quelled. Nothing has come to light to throw discredit upon General Middleton's operations from a military standpoint; and we are much mistaken if any considerable number of thoughtful civilians will conclude from the evidence presented that the General was in the least blameworthy.

The following were the findings of the committee presented to the House of Commons, by which body they have not yet been considered or acted upon:

1. That during the North-West Rebellion of 1885 and on the day of the surrender of the Indian Chief Poundmaker, who had been in arms against the Government of Canada, a number of half-breeds came into Battleford, among whom was Charles Bremner, a half-breed trader and farmer, a resident of Bresaylor, twenty-two miles from Battleford, having in his possession a large quantity of valuable furs.

2. General Middleton being in command of the Canadian forces engaged in the suppression of the rebellion and being in Battleford, and having information that these half-breeds had come in from Poundmaker's camp and that the furs were being carried away, gave orders that they should be put in charge of the Dominion Mounted Police, and they were accordingly placed in the Police Barracks at Battleford for safe keeping.

3. Some weeks later, while General Middleton was at Fort Pitt, Mr. Hayter Reed (a member of his staff), who had then returned from Battleford, called attention to the furs, and reminded General Middleton that the person from whom they had been taken was said to be a rebel. Thereupon, after consultation with Mr. Reed and Mr. Bedson (another member of his staff), General Middleton assumed to confiscate the furs.