

THE CANADIAN MILITIA GAZETTE

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

Third Year.
VOL. III, No. 16.

OTTAWA, THURSDAY, 20th OCTOBER, 1887.

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

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Comment and Criticism.

THE effect of the acceptance of a staff appointment upon battalion rank in the militia was the subject of a query in our issue of the 8th September, an answer subsequently being furnished stating that such an appointment necessitated the giving up of regimental position. It will doubtless have been noticed that a general order has now issued on this subject, this being contained in the orders of the 7th inst., published on page 117, and reading as follows: "Adverting to Par. 81, R. & O., 1883. Any officer of a corps of active militia if appointed by general orders to a position on the headquarters or district staff, is to be considered as having vacated his position in such corps." In accordance with this regulation Major W. King, who holds the appointment of paymaster and superintendent of stores for Military District No. 3, has been relieved from the duties of Paymaster of the 14th Battalion, and his name has been removed from the list of its officers.

THE Minister of Customs, Hon. Mackenzie Bowell, is an ex-member of the militia, having retired from the force in 1874, with the rank of lieutenant-colonel. During his period of service he proved himself a valuable officer, notably at the time of the Fenian raids, and it is only natural that he still cherishes a warm feeling of friendship towards the force. It may, therefore, be confidently expected that he will do all in his power to have removed the recently imposed tax upon the necessary articles of equipment which have to be imported, not being produced in this country. We are happy to be able to inform our readers this week that he now has the matter under consideration, and has already signified his intention of recommending to the government that a drawback in full be granted when it is shown that such importations upon which duty has been paid have actually gone into the service of the force.

THIS concession would be an important one, and will be gratefully received. But it is not enough. Especially when it is also semi-officially announced that "no draw-back will be allowed on arms, as it is thought by including this class of goods an opportunity would be afforded unprincipled personages to bring in rifles, etc., *ad lib.*" The only persons, unprincipled or otherwise, likely to become importers of the antiquated Snider, or the Marcini-Henry rifle, also now an obsolete weapon, are the members of the militia force and the very few civilians, generally ex-militiamen, who care to participate in the Provincial and Dominion rifle matches. They are striving to learn at their own expense an accomplishment which they ought to acquire under government direc-

tion and largely at the public expense. It is but natural that they should wish to have rifles the best of the rather poor kind in vogue, and we submit that when one of these men is prepared to expend \$30 or so for a Snider rifle he should not be required to pay out, in addition, a third of that amount to the government for the privilege of buying the weapon.

IN his interesting budget from Toronto our correspondent "Linch-Pin" brings up a couple of important points in connection with our recently published explanation of the system of credits prevailing for competitions under the direction of the Dominion Artillery Association. Concerning the first—that respecting the limit for bursting shrapnel shell—it is in order to state that this remains the same, with the firing range increased to 1,700 yards, as it was when the range was only 1,400 though the limit might properly, as our correspondent shows, have been reduced when the range was lengthened. The matter has already been brought to the attention of the Dominion Artillery Association, and it is said to be not improbable that a change will be made shortly. "Linch-Pin" also wants to know more about that ricochet hit with common shell percussion fuse. For the credit of the fuse we would like to add here that the ricochet commonly occurs when the competitor has negligently omitted to withdraw the safety-pin.

THE same correspondent cites the case of a reduction of a corporal to the ranks, and proceeds to inquire concerning the powers of commanding officers in such cases. "Some," he says, "contend that they can reduce whenever they see fit—of course with the general officer's approval. I believe you decided, in answer to a correspondent, that a C. O. did not have this authority." We answered a question on such a point in our issue of the 14th July, but the decision was more authoritative than an opinion of our own, being a quotation from the R. & O. 1883. Par. 260 reads as follows:—

"260. Non-commissioned officers may, with their commanding officer's consent, resign their rank and revert to the rank and position they may have previously held, but they are not to be allowed to do so in order to escape trial by court-martial, without special sanction.

"When a non-commissioned officer commits an offence which in the opinion of his commanding officer requires the cancelling of the appointment of such non-commissioned officer, or of his reduction, *the case must be referred to headquarters.*

The italics are ours. The words so emphasized indicate plainly enough that the power does not lie with the commanding officer, though there is no reason to suppose that his *recommendation* would not be acted upon, provided he could show just cause. But no doubt scores of officers exercise the power, owing to the fact that the non-commissioned officers are not nearly so well acquainted as they might be with the Regulations and Orders. "Linch-Pin's" next question, about the horses, is too hard. We give it up. Perhaps some other fellow who intends to join later on would lend his horse to be broken in, or perhaps a livery stable keeper might be made to suffer. It would very much depend on the character of the volunteer.

ALL France is this week wild over a new sensation, which has culminated in the arrest of the military pet, General Boulanger. General Caffarel, a leading officer of the army, had been charged with