

# THE CANADIAN MILITIA GAZETTE

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## NOTE AND COMMENT.

A noteworthy feature in connection with the annual matches of the York County (N.B.) Rifle Association, published in this issue, is the frequency with which names of members of the Infantry School Corps appear in the prize lists. It has been in the past a reproach to our Permanent Corps that they made no effort to excel or even to attain fair proficiency in rifle shooting, but latterly there has been a change for the better. The Commandant of the Fredericton school takes a great personal interest in rifle shooting, and this fact no doubt largely accounts for the good showing made by his men.

The *Broad Arrow* quotes from a contemporary, with appreciation of its force, an article calling attention to the lack of instruction in the use of the bayonet, the weapon so terribly effective in the hands of the old-time British soldier. The article proceeds:—

“While inventors are busy perfecting the newest thing in bayonets, the British soldier is not being taught how to wield any bayonet at all. The most perfect weapon is useless in unskilled hands, and the average infantry soldier is utterly unskilled in the use of the bayonet. True, he learns a series of guards and points which he performs in a mechanical sort of way, and which are supposed to be a thorough training in the use of the bayonet. Why, nine out of ten men, and perhaps more, have never known what it is to face another man with any weapon, even a dummy bayonet! And yet these men are expected to engage in hand-to-hand fight against the Afghan hillman or the Arab spearman, trained from their youth up to close combat. Going through the ‘bayonet exercise’ will never give men the necessary skill and confidence. Every man should be taught by the experience of practising against his comrade how to defend himself in a hand-to-hand fight.”

While having no expectation of bayonet encounters with Afghan, Arab, or other experts, our militia should be interested in the point stated above. Very few even of the crack corps can show a fair average of proficiency in the use of the bayonet either in the stereotyped movements of the drill book or otherwise, and those having time to spare during the coming winter evenings would find bayonet exercise profitable, not only from a military but also from an athletic standpoint.

The Home Government is about to receive from our Militia Department a report on the defences and fortifications of Canada, prepared some time ago for Imperial information. Lord Salisbury's Administration is preparing military estimates and revising the whole Imperial system of outlay for the purposes of offence and defence, and requires this information from Canada as part of the data for the revision. Major-General Herbert, it is understood, has made a general report to the Imperial Government on the

militia system of the Dominion. The report which is about to be transmitted is a more elaborate one, and covers far more ground with greater particularity of detail.

Remarking upon the source of coal supply for the ships now on duty in Behring sea, the *Army and Navy Gazette* says: “If the rumours of coal with good steaming qualities discovered along the route of the Canadian Pacific should turn out to be well grounded, it will prove of great advantage in such an emergency as this, and afford a fresh illustration of the enormous utility of the Canadian Pacific line for naval requirements. It may not be generally known that, when the Canadian Pacific was opened, a large quantity of naval stores consigned to Esquimalt, for which an urgent requisition had been made, was sent out from the naval yard at Deptford, and formed part of the freight of the first goods train which ran from the Atlantic to the Pacific seaboard on British territory. This railway has again been utilised in a similar way recently for the quick despatch of material and stores unexpectedly required for repairs and refit of ships in the North Pacific.”

The Citadel at Quebec is hereafter to float the Royal Standard on Royal anniversaries, a distinction prescribed by Canadian regulation to but one other place, the residence of the Governor General, the R. and O. saying that “The Royal Standard shall be flown at Government House on the Queen's Birthday, and on the Day of Her Majesty's Ascension and Coronation.” By the Queen's Regulations, the Royal Standard is flown on these anniversaries at certain named citadels garrisoned by the Imperial troops, Halifax being one of these. It will be only natural if the distinction allowed to Quebec by the last General Order is claimed also for the “Royal” Military College, and the “Royal” Schools of Instruction.

The *Kölnische Zeitung* has recently been urging the advantage of increasing the German Army and introducing the “two years' service system,” and has revived the discussion on that question. The *Norddeutsche* reproduces the Rhenish paper's article with evident satisfaction, and hopes much from the discussion. The *Kreuz Zeitung*, on the other hand, regards the shortening of the term of service as a “concession to extreme Liberalism, which would diminish Germany's power of resistance by impairing the thoroughness of her military training.” The most eminent German experts, including the Emperor, are in favour of the change, but His Majesty has hitherto declined to carry it out on account of the enormous expense it would involve.