

THE ACTIVE MILITIA.

Owing to circumstances there were no camps until the autumn, and as these had been decided upon late in the season, only a portion of the force elected to come out at that time, consequently I was not able to see more than a limited portion of the whole force, but on the whole I was satisfied.

There was a marked difference between corps, and I could not but trace the reason for this difference to lie in the tone and example, first, of the immediate commanding officer of the corps, and next, in that of the officer commanding the district to which the corps belonged.

Where these two officers were keen and earnest the corps were good, but I repeat, that on the whole, I was satisfied, especially considering that most of the corps I saw had not attended camps for two or more years.

Both at Niagara and London I was particularly struck with the earnest desire to make the very most of the training, discernible on the part of all ranks.

In the cavalry certain changes in organization have been introduced by the adoption of the squadron system. This course was found necessary in order to modernize the instruction of this arm, in accordance with the principles laid down in the Imperial Cavalry Drill Book, which is based upon that system of organization.

In the artillery the commencement has been made of raising the field batteries from four guns to the proper service establishment of 6 guns, thus following the lead of the armies of the world, none of which have less than six guns.

The one principle, which I look upon as of vital necessity to the whole force, is that the whole force shall be drilled annually. This should be so firmly established that nothing can alter it. It is of no use to grant it for one year and take it away the next. It touches at the root of all efficiency; better far to reduce the force to one half, and make them efficient by annual drill, than to have double or treble the force on paper, and only call them out once every second or third year.

The city corps, take them as a whole, certainly show an earnest desire to utilize to the fullest extent possible all means of training within their power, but they suffer from having few opportunities of camp training, or of practical field work.

I propose to remedy this wherever possible, by instituting camps in the immediate neighbourhood of towns, where men could pass the nights, returning to their civil duties during the daytime, and putting in an hour or so of good work in early morning, and again in the evening. Great benefit would result, I think.

ARMS AND MUNITIONS OF WAR.

It was decided early in the year to re-arm the militia, and for that purpose the Q.M.G. was sent to England to consult with the highest authorities as to the description of weapons to be purchased.

After very grave consideration a decision was arrived at, and I venture respectfully to record here my gratitude for the liberal spirit in which my advice was received by both sides of the House. As a result the very latest patterns of arms and munitions of war were ordered, full details of which were announced in the House by the then Minister of Militia.

The rifles ordered have nearly all arrived, and a proportion were issued to the active militia for the fall camps. The permanent corps as instructors to the militia have all been armed with them. Also an advance issue has been made for instructional purposes to most of the city corps. But the cleaning and marking is necessarily a slow process; it is being proceeded with as rapidly as possible, but before these arms can be issued regularly, I must be thoroughly satisfied that the arrangements for their repair and their proper care are satisfactory.

I intend very shortly to lay before you for consideration proposals with regard to this.