

struck the levers and ejected the cartridges. The blame for all this the correspondent puts upon the "complex, ill-shapen Boxer cartridge," and in this opinion the authorities must be inclined to agree, for Mr. Brand, replying to a question in the English house of commons announced that it was inferior in some respects to the solid drawn cartridge, and that this last pattern was in course of manufacture.

The day of novelties in military tactics and military inventions has not yet passed away, as is evidenced by the trial of Major Larmour's rifle screen, alluded to in another column, but chiefly by the description that reaches us from England of the employment of bicycles for scouting purposes. During the Easter manoeuvres one regiment sent out a reconnoitring party of this kind, which did good service, communicating information that could not otherwise have been obtained, and although eventually they were taken prisoners of war by the simple expedient of stretching a rope across the road, they proved the usefulness of such a method of communication in a country with roads as good and numerous as England. They could not be used to such advantage on our rough Canadian roads, unless the Indians could be persuaded to believe they were something supernatural.

We have been shown photographs of a portable rifleman's screen designed by Major Larmour, Retired list, superintendent of the G.T.R. at Stratford, to protect skirmishers while in motion or while firing. It consists of a plate of steel of 13 gauge five feet high by three feet wide, weighing forty pounds, folded down the middle into V shape, perforated near the top with a couple of eye-holes and farther down with an aperture through which the rifle can be fired by a kneeling man. It is proposed that these portable rifle-pits, as their inventor calls them, shall be carried on waggons, and when skirmishers are deployed that each shall take a screen and sling it on his left shoulder by a strap provided for the purpose. There is no doubt that such shields would deflect bullets striking the plates at an acute angle from the front, but it is questionable whether they would not impede the skirmishers so seriously as to counterbalance this advantage. There are so many considerations to be taken into account in judging of them that they would at least require the test of practical use before being pronounced either a success or the reverse.

We have to thank many Canadian journals as well as most of the prominent members of the Militia force for the very kind manner and encouraging words with which they have received our initial numbers, and to assure them that this cordial reception will incite us to renewed exertions to increase the merit of the GAZETTE. The only thing we should like to ask is a more ready response to our request for information from outside corps as to their doings at drill shed or rifle range, for insertion under the heading "Doings at Headquarters" or "The Target," as the case may be. It is impossible that such information can be compiled by our own staff from exchanges, and the only way to get full particulars is to have an official deputed from each corps and from each rifle association who will attend to the matter. May we ask the senior officers in each case to see to this point? In one or two instances the objection has been made that no names are published as connected with this journal. We may here state that arrangements have been completed for continuing its publication until it has been proved whether there is enough *esprit de corps* in the Canadian Militia to decently support an organ, and that it will be carried through at least one whole year independently of financial considerations; and, although we consider that the appearance, tone and contents of our journal should carry with them a sufficient recommendation, we beg to refer anyone distrustful of our standing to the militia staff or commanding officers in this city, to all of whom our personnel is known. Finally we may say that

although the increased interest in militia matters caused by the rebellion furnished a good occasion for the inception of our venture, it was never intended that the paper should either mainly occupy itself with the doings in the North-West or cease when that campaign came to an end. It is proposed that it shall be a permanent institution, and to that end we once more bespeak the hearty support of the force.

DEFENCES OF BRITISH COLUMBIA.

Our western province is the most undefended at the present time of all the provinces of the Dominion, and in the event of hostilities between Great Britain and Russia is in about as unenviable a position as can possibly be conceived. Victoria, the capital, is pretty nearly mid-way between Montreal and Petropoloski—being 2,800 miles from the former and 2,900 miles from the latter place, so that in less than ten days after declaration of war (and in the absence of any of H. M. ships) a very small hostile fleet could easily pounce upon that fair city. Moreover, there are other places belonging to the United States in still closer proximity to the shores of the Pacific Province, viz.:—San Juan Island, some 13 miles off only; Port Townsend, in Washington Territory, within 38 miles, and San Francisco, 750 miles. Some people may say that a rupture between Great Britain and the United States is not a factor of consideration at all, as such a contingency is never likely to arise, still to be "forewarned is to be forearmed," which motto applies with ample force in view of the recent impending war cloud, now temporarily vanishing, but which most surely will burst in the not distant future. At the present time the established strength of the militia does not exceed 322 officers and men in the whole province, or about an ordinary Ontario battalion, viz.: Garrison artillery (4 batteries) numbering 187, and rifles, 135. Of these 230 were last year authorized to drill, and the following performed their drill at company headquarters:—

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Victoria Rifle Company.....	28
New Westminster Rifle Company.....	34
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The Nanaimo Rifle Company, not turning out, have since been disbanded, and possibly a battery of garrison artillery may be opened at this important point, where there are extensive and valuable coal beds. The formation of a battery of garrison artillery at Granville (Burrard Inlet) is also contemplated, and even in the interior, in the Okanagan district, a corps of mounted rifles may yet be formed, and at Chilliwack a movement is said to be on foot to form a rifle company. So much for the "personnel" of the present and near future.

There are three earthwork fortifications, Beacon Hill, Macauley Point, and Brother's Island, two of which (unless recently repaired) are unserviceable. The artillery armament consists of

- One 8-inch 9-ton M. L. R. gun,
- Three 7-inch 6½-ton M. L. R. guns,
- Six 64-pounders of 64 and 71 cwt., M. L. R. guns,

in all ten guns, mounted on naval carriages and slides, for the defence of Victoria and Esquimalt, and supplied with ammunition equal to about 100 rounds per gun. There are also two obsolete 24-pounder howitzers at New Westminster, the carriages and limbers of which have rotted and fallen to pieces. Nanaimo has no defences at all, so that practically the three principal cities of our western Province have only the barest semblance of what is generally known as means of defence. There are many old-fashioned and obsolete rifled guns lying idle in the old country, and not long ago rumors were rife, when the