

# THE CANADIAN MILITIA GAZETTE

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## Comment and Criticism.

FIFTEEN of the first twenty on the list from which next year's team for Wimbledon will be chosen, have already signified their willingness to go. The secretary of the D. R. A. wrote some time ago to the first thirty, asking each whether or not he would be prepared to go if chosen. Answers have been received from twenty-four, and only two state that they will be unable to go. The association supplies to each man likely to be on the team a Martini rifle (should he desire it) and also two hundred rounds of ammunition with which to practise.

THERE is something apparently needed to perfect the military system of this country when a state of affairs is allowed to prevail such as that commented upon by the *Montreal Star* in the following paragraph: "Montreal has the largest militia force of any city in the Dominion. We may say, too, that it is, at least, one of the most important military centres in the country, and yet we see at the present hour this large force and these great interests worse provided for than any place in Canada. The drill hall is not yet finished, and there is, practically, no rifle range for the men to practise at; and between these two shortcomings, the militiamen of Montreal have good reason to complain. The wonder is that the force hangs together at all; but it was ever thus." Toronto, another important military centre, has also practically been without a rifle range for the greater part of the summer. The apathy shown by the authorities is discouraging to the force.

NOTING the near approach of the date for his retirement from the army, under the new rule, the *Army and Navy Gazette* pays this tribute to the officer commanding our militia: "The only retirement on the list of general officers taking place in November is that of Major-General Sir F. Middleton, commanding the Canadian militia, who will attain the age for compulsory retirement on the 4th of that month. He retires after forty-five years' service with a good record of staff service, and also of service in the field. He became a major-general (local) in 1884, when he was appointed commandant of the Dominion militia, and he attained the substantive rank in the following year. During the three years he has been in Canada he has effected great improvements in the condition of the militia force, while his successful campaign against the rebels in the North-West considerably added to the reputation he bore prior to that event."

SOME of those well meaning persons who have, on behalf of the rank and file, been contending that officers should not take part in rifle matches, might have been led to modify their views a bit had they been

at the Rideau range last Saturday, when the annual matches of the Guards' Rifle Association were in progress. There were a hundred and twenty non-commissioned officers and men present, and *four* officers. The day was a very disagreeable one, being very cold, and a raw wind prevailing, and the presence of the officers would have helped materially to reconcile the men to put up with the discomforts to which they were subjected. As it was their absence provoked much unfavorable criticism. There was probably not one man amongst the great number of competitors who would not have been heartily glad had he found the complete roll of officers competing against him, or who did not feel that the rifle association and the shooting interests of the regiment were being neglected by those to whom he had been led to look for leadership and advice. We have no doubt that the feeling in every other regiment is the same, and that the rank and file will always be found more ready to sacrifice time, money and comfort in the performance of duty when they know that their officers will favor the occasion with their presence, than when they have cause to believe that the whole burden is to be left with themselves.

THE position of the German soldier is contrasted with that of the British soldier by a writer in *Blackwood's Magazine*, who says: "The position of the German peasant soldier may bring with it certain inconveniences to which his friends in civil life are not exposed, but for these compensation is made by the respect in which he is everywhere held, and the privileges which his uniform command for him." On the contrary, in England no matter what the immediate motive of enlistment, whether a momentary caprice or some less creditable cause, the act itself is looked upon in his own circle as a degradation. The boy's parents still, it is believed, regard their soldier son as a lost creature, and for a while at least are ashamed of him when he comes home on furlough, even if the breast of his tunic be adorned with a medal. It is not very long ago since a non-commissioned officer in the Household Cavalry, who presumed to enter the coffee room of a Windsor hotel wearing the uniform of his regiment, was ordered by the innkeeper to withdraw, his presence being distasteful to the travelling bagmen by whom the house was chiefly frequented. And simultaneously a private in the Foot Guards was told at the door of the National Gallery that admission to such places as that "was not for the likes of he." The author thinks a change for the better is beginning to manifest itself, but asks: "How long will it be before the voluntarily enlisted man shall hold his head as high as the conscript, who whether he hail from the cottage, or the shop, or the mansion of a Von, is treated wherever he goes as one of the élite of Prussia's sons?"

## Winnipeg.—A Military View of its Possible Future.—V.

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THERE can be no doubt that the exuberant blessings of this great supply of agricultural produce will thoroughly revolutionise the grain trade of Great Britain—and as it will increase indefinitely its effect on the market of the Mother Country will be to eventually free her from all anxiety about food supplies from foreign sources. In 1886 she imported