

# THE CANADIAN MILITIA GAZETTE

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## Practice and Precept at Variance.

THE Toronto riflemen have met with another reverse—the Garrison Common ranges being closed pending an investigation into the charges reported of narrow escapes of boating parties on the lake on the 9th inst. It is hard to understand why the investigation could not have been made without once more stopping the shooting; and especially without prohibiting it upon such short notice that upwards of a hundred riflemen proceeded to the range on Saturday afternoon in ignorance of the order, and only to find that they had needlessly made the long journey from the city, absolutely wasting the half day. The closing order was only received late on Friday evening, and though published in some of the morning papers it escaped the attention of a great many interested.

The range is no more dangerous now than it has been for years. According to the Minister of Militia's statement in Parliament, it may easily be made quite safe. This statement was upon the authority of the report of a special committee, who made a careful investigation. It is in order to inquire why that report has not been acted upon. What is there to be gained by the delay? Apparently nothing; while repeated disappointments such as that of Saturday last cannot fail to be prejudicial to the shooting interests of the force. The opinions very freely expressed by the men upon the range, when they found they could not have their expected afternoon's practice, showed how keenly they felt the authorities' lack of consideration for them.

Let additional safeguards be provided, so as to remove all possibility of accident, but in the meantime the prohibition of their use of the ranges is not justifiable. The people of Toronto know their location and the direction the bullets are likely to take if they escape upon the lake. If, possessing this knowledge, there are any who choose to row in the particular place, there will be nobody but themselves to blame should a few be popped off by stray bullets. It would be a blessing perhaps if there were just another casualty at this spot. Though rather severe upon the victims, perhaps the result would likely be that those people who make nuisances of themselves by persisting in rowing within the supposed danger line, would avoid the place for the future when the red flag is up. Thus the possibility of mishap would cease.

It is laughable—or would be so were it not for the serious consequences—to see the Militia General Orders direct that rifle instruction and practice is to be placed above everything else in importance, while at the same time the thousands of Montreal's militiamen are left without a range at all, and those of Toronto are placed at the mercy of any foolhardy crank who from cussedness alone refuses to keep out of harm's way.

## Topics of the Week.

Rather unexpectedly, a change has been made in the command of the Wimbledon team, which sails from Quebec to-day. Lt.-Col. Chas. Macdonald, of the 66th Batt., Halifax, having found it impossible to go, on account of pressing official duties, as well as for private reasons, the command was offered to Lt.-Col. Frank Bond, of the Prince of Wales Rifles, and he accepted. Col. Bond has long been actively identified with the shooting interests of the Dominion, and there is none who more worthily than he can do the honours for the team at Wimbledon.

General Middleton this week commenced his tour of inspection of the brigade camps, starting with No. 2 District, at Niagara, where he found everything in excellent order, so far as depended upon the men in camp and those in charge of them. Niagara possesses great natural advantages for camping purposes, the site being probably unsurpassed in the Dominion in so far as healthfulness of situation and facilities for drill and the enjoyment of camp life are concerned. Lt.-Col. Otter, D.A.G., deserves congratulation upon the unvarying order and strict attention to duty, which marked the twelve days under canvass. A representative of the MILITIA GAZETTE is at the camp this week, and a further notice from him will appear in next issue.

The *Fredericton Capital*, which always takes a great interest in militia matters, this week devotes a two-column editorial to the relative claims of rural and city corps. While it admits that city corps are more readily concentrated than country corps, and that consequently it is desirable that their drill should be kept up without any of those "hibernating" intervals which are so disastrous to the efficiency of country corps, it argues that where rural corps have companies located in cities these companies should have the same privilege as city battalions, namely, of being paid for drilling every year, for they are equally liable to be called out in case of emergency, and in past emergencies have been called out, and have always nobly responded to the call. We commend this view to the favourable consideration of the powers that be.

We invite attention to the advertisement of the firm of Crean & Houston, military tailors and outfitters, of Toronto, which appears this week. Mr. John F. Crean has been a constant advertiser in the MILITIA GAZETTE, and we have therefore a pleasant interest in taking this opportunity to inform our readers that his business has developed to such an extent as to make it advisable for him to lessen his individual responsibilities by forming a partnership with Mr. Houston, a gentleman of good connection and extended practical experience. Mr. Crean, it may not be out of place to mention, is a zealous militiaman himself, holding the very responsible position of Sergeant-Major of the Queen's Own Rifles. While on the subject, we would draw attention to the fact that Canadian enterprise has made ample provision for supplying our militia with uniforms of Dominion manufacture, fully equal to the best imported goods. The business cards of the leading firms in this line of business will be