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MILITIA GENERAL ORDERS.
No. 5, of 1st March, 1889.

Topics of the Week.

The Queen's Own Rifles gain a good officer in the person of Lieut. J. F. Crean, the popular Sergeant-Major, who has just left the non-commissioned for the commissioned ranks. An enthusiast in military matters of every kind, Mr. Crean was simply invaluable as a Sergeant-Major, and it will be no easy task to fill that important position as for many years he has filled it.

As will be seen in the Militia General Orders published in this issue, Lt.-Col. the Hon. J.A. Ouimet, the Speaker of the House of Commons, has resigned the command of the 65th Battalion Mount Royal Rifles. He will be succeeded by Major Dugas. His retirement will be learned with regret, making one less the number of Active Militiamen in parliament. But as Col. Ouimet retains his rank, he will doubtless retain also a lively interest in the force.

Having resolved to grant the kit allowance to the York and Simcoe battalion that served in the North-West in 1885, the Government will make amends for the delay by adding interest for the three and a half years which have elapsed since the other corps on active service were paid their allowance. Such, at least, was implied in the answer made by Sir John Macdonald in the House on Monday, in answer to Mr. Mullock. To that gentleman, and to Lieut.-Cols. O'Brien, Tyrwhitt, and Denison, the York and Simcoe Battalion are not a little indebted for the patient perseverance with which they have pressed the claim upon the attention of the Government.

One of the many victims of the catastrophe to a Grand Trunk train at the bridge at St. George, Ont., last week, was Surgeon-Major L. H. Swan, of the 22nd Battalion. The remains were interred at Woodstock on Saturday, 2nd inst. with military honours. The deceased was a zealous and enthusiastic officer, and with one exception was the oldest medical officer in the militia force of No. 1 district. He and the present commanding officer of the battalion joined the old Embro "Highland Rifle Company" on the same day, 27 years ago, and at the time of his death were the only "charter members" still in the regiment. During this long service it may be stated that he never missed a parade of the battalion and he was a very active worker on regimental committees. His untimely death is greatly felt by all ranks. The funeral cortege was composed of nearly all the officers, the band, and about 70 rank and file besides an immense number of citizens. The escort was officered by Captains Davis and Macqueen and Lieut. Anderson. The pall bearers were Lieut.-Col. Munro, Major Loveys, Captains Bleakley, Day, Hegler and Ball.

The Infantry School at St. Johns.

It is sincerely to be hoped that the matter of removing the School of Infantry now in operation at St. John's, P. Q., to some locality where its usefulness will be greater, will ere long receive the serious consideration of the Government. Time and again we have referred to the matter, and while printing one reason after another for the choice of some other site, have invited answers from any who favour the present location. No answer has come, save from a St. Johns newspaper which would perhaps be considered wanting in loyalty to the town in which it is published did it not advocate the retention of the school there.

The large outlay necessary for the maintenance of the Infantry School system is cheerfully assented to, but in return it is only reasonable to ask the greatest possible benefit derivable under the system governing them. As schools they are all through very expensive, the cost per certificate granted being, as pointed out in detail a few weeks ago, exceedingly high. But from no other institution is there so insignificant a return as from "B" Royal School of Infantry, located at St. Johns. This is the only Infantry School for the Province of Quebec. The infantry strength of that province is 10,106, and out of this total the school instructed—or granted certificates to, for a few students left without completing the course—only 40 in 1888! Of these 16 were officers and 24 non-commissioned officers and men. Looking at the record of certificates granted at the other institutions for infantry instruction, we find that A School, Fredericton, N.B., which in its constituency—the three maritime provinces—has a total infantry strength of 4,966, had qualified 29 officers and 20 men. C School, Toronto, qualified 43 officers and 44 men, and D School, London, open only for two-thirds of the year, had qualified 25 officers and 21 men. The infantry strength of Ontario, from which the 133 officers instructed by these schools presumably came, is 15,059. In other words, A School instructed one in every 100 in its constituency—the maritime provinces. C and D Schools instructed one in every 113 infantry men in their constituency—the Province of Ontario; whilst B School instructed only one for every 255 in the infantry corps of the Province of Quebec! These calculations are made on the assumption that none went out of their proper districts for instruction; but we believe a few Ontario officers and men, crowded out of the Ontario schools, went to St. Johns as an alternative, and certain Quebec Province officers for reasons of their own preferred the Toronto school to that at St. Johns. So that the showing of the latter school is even worse than appears from the foregoing figures.

One may well inquire what is the reason for all this. It is certainly not that there is less need of instruction in the Quebec battalions than in those of the other provinces; and we fancy the Quebec officers will be slow to admit that they are less than any others desirous of making themselves efficient. The oft repeated fact remains—the school is a failure in its present location. Establish it in Montreal, and we believe its success would be assured. Its presence too would be a stimulus to that already enthusiastic body the Montreal force. A heavy expense would be involved in providing new quarters, and the Opposition outcry