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THE CANADIAN

Military Gazette

Successor to the Canadian Militia Gazette.

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MONTREAL, APRIL 1, 1895.

Notes and Comments

While there was nothing particularly brilliant in the Hon. J. C. Patterson's administration of the Militia Department, members of the force will regret his retirement. While lacking the practical military experience which we hold the Minister of Militia and Defence should be possessed of, Mr. Patterson made a very respectable and useful minister indeed. One thing the force discovered, he was in earnest. He did not accept the portfolio merely to fill a gap, intending to be a mere salaried figure-head. He was determined to do the best he could for the militia under existing conditions, and to carry out his wishes intelligently

he industriously set himself to work to post himself on the organization and requirements of the force. The militia had considerable confidence in him, for it was soon discovered that his word could be depended upon. The improvements he inaugurated were, it is true, of the tinkering character which have become traditional in the department, but it was scarcely to be expected that with his limited knowledge of the requirements that he would undertake to shoulder the responsibility of introducing the much-needed scheme of re-organization. Had he remained at the head of the department much longer greater things would naturally have been expected of him. As it is he was one of the best ministers we have ever had, and that is scarcely saying enough, for truly it is not much.

According to all accounts Mr. Dickey is to be the new minister. Whoever it is, it is to be hoped that he will be a man of some practical experience in the militia and with a determination to put the force on a thoroughly efficient footing. The minister who administers the militia into satisfactory shape will deserve well of the Dominion.

One of the first duties of the new minister will be to fill the vacancies in the permanent force. Will he give the commissions to influential incompetents or select either graduates of the Royal Military College or else officers who have made a mark for themselves in the Active Militia? We shall be able to gauge the new administration pretty well by the result, so let us all watch. The charge of lack of material to choose from cannot be made this

time, for some of the best graduates the R.M.C. ever turned out are among the applicants for these commissions.

A reader sends me a letter which appeared in the *New York Herald* of a recent date, which he points out supports very strongly the arguments in these columns against the total abolition of display parades. The letter is certainly very American in style, but it puts the case strongly. It is signed "Veteran," and reads as follows:

"I am an old soldier. I am a member of the National Guard of this State, having served in every position, and now occupy a high one. All the talk going on about forced marches, camp, riot duty, etc., is simply wasted energy. A week's tour of camp is all that we require in the way of hardship, unless we are compelled to. What the guard want to induce respectable young men to join is a little more street parades, where they can show themselves to their girls in uniform. The vainer the man the better soldier he is; this I know from experience. Give me a company of dandy soldiers. I will face four times their numbers in lower grade. What the guard wants is to elevate the tone of its members—more gala days, with bright bunting, girls and men applauding, a grand hurrah. 'Did you see me to-day?' 'Was I not the best of the whole bunch?' 'Didn't we do fine?' &c. General Emmons Clark conducted the Seventh regiment on that basis for twenty five years. Look at it to-day. A soldier is an actor and loves applause and is vain."

Among the diverse objects displayed in the new museum of the Royal United Service Institution at the opening by His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, was one which had no antiquarian or historical associations, but which deservedly attracted attention and careful inspection. It was the trunk of a tree, seventeen inches in diameter, which had been cut completely across in fifteen seconds by the fire of a small-bore Maxim machine