

THE CANADIAN MILITIA GAZETTE

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A correspondent who has sent for publication over a *nom de plume* a letter containing certain vague reflections upon the officers of the permanent corps in particular and the militia administration in general, takes occasion to remark that he "relies upon the often expressed independence of the Editor" for the publication of the letter, the Editor "so proving that he has the real interest of the military at heart." We decidedly object to this method of proof. Our attitude is and has been one of independence towards accusers as well as accused, towards the private citizen or soldier with perhaps only a fancied grievance as well as towards the persons in authority against whom he may feel resentment for the time being. We do not see how the "the real interest of the military service" is to be promoted by the publication of vague inuendoes or general fault-finding, with no attempt to specifically locate the trouble, or the suggestion of a remedy. Without any reference to the correspondent in question, it is opportune to remark here, as our experience, that many of those most valiant with the pen, in the shelter of anonymity, are most gentle, not to say subservient, when on public occasions they are brought face to face with those whom they delight privately to berate.

A rifleman writes the Editor from St. John, N.B., that "the boys all wish to be remembered to you and are loud in their praise of your D. R. A. number." This week, also, a Major writes from Toronto—"Your paper is always welcome"; and that he is a conscientious man is evidenced by an expression of regret at being even a few months late with his renewal subscription. By the same mail comes a letter from a Corporal in Toronto containing a renewal subscription accompanied by these words of kindly appreciation: "I renew my subscription with the greatest of pleasure, for I always look forward to the arrival of THE GAZETTE, which I take great interest in reading. I think it is doing a great deal of good for the militia of Canada." Needless to say, we are very grateful for the encouragement thus offered, which is but a sample of what we have received from all ranks and from all parts of the Dominion during the past five years. We have kept a straight, honest course: have had no selfish purposes to serve; while inviting useful correspondence have refused to give our columns for the ventilation of private spleens and petty jealousies; and as a reward, though the financial support received from the militia has been disappointingly small, we are happy in the possession of a mine of good wishes.

Major-General Beavan Edwards, who went to Australia to report upon the state of the defences there, has reported to the Colonial Defence Committee, advising that the militia forces of the several Australian

colonies be federated, that an officer of the rank of lieutenant-general be appointed to inspect in peace and command in war, and that a military college, a small arms factory, and ordnance stores be established. The Defence Committee in reporting the General's recommendations say that after all Australia need not fear attempted territorial aggressions, as her danger lies rather in assaults by an enemy upon colonial commerce, and this being the case a small naval armament is proposed. If General Edwards' suggestions be adopted Australia will be put through a process similar to that by which the Canadian force has been raised to its present effective condition.

There are those, no doubt—for they have been heard from before now—who would take exception to the phrase "effective condition" as applied to the Canadian militia, because there are so many things we should have that are lacking, with no immediate prospect of their supply. But neither is there an immediate prospect of a call to arms, and judging by the progress of the past our little force may be expected to be greatly improved ere the summons comes. Annual drills for the full strength, which no one need be surprised to have announced for next season, would do much to arouse enthusiasm sufficient to cause all ranks to pay more attention to military studies, and particularly to brush up their knowledge of field work, in which many of the best parade officers are sadly deficient. Neither the expected annual drills nor the more modern equipment which will probably be the next bit of encouragement to the militia will be of much use if the members do not strive to develop amongst themselves the spirit of enterprise necessary to make the best use of their opportunities. We could name even some city regiments whose rank and file are allowed to continue from year to year in blissful ignorance of any of the practical duties of a soldier, and who have nothing but a weary round of barrack square drill, with the occasional variation of rifle practice aimed at the moon and with results as blank as the cartridges.

From two of the corps whose enterprise helped to provide the Thanksgiving Day pageant for Toronto last year, there comes the rumour that the expense involved may prove an effectual barrier to their participation in the sham fight proposed for that holiday this season. It is admitted that the practical value of such an engagement is almost destroyed by the interference of the crowd bound to gather and become hopelessly involved in the smoke and din of the battle if its scene is laid too near any great centre of population, and hence transportation expenses become a necessity. It would perhaps be regarded by the riflemen as blasphemy were we to suggest that in the case of some Western regiments we could mention, a substantial transportation fund might be raised by diminishing the princely prizes annually given for the regimental and company rifle matches. Unless there be previous careful instruction, the one day spent upon the ranges on the occasion of these annual prize distributions is not a tenth as profitable as a day spent in field work would be, though for the latter previous training is necessary also. There are, however, many regiments who have not much money to spare for any purpose, and it is well worth the consider-