

# THE CANADIAN MILITIA GAZETTE

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*United Service Gazette.*

MISCELLANEOUS.

## Topics of the Week.

Professor Goldwin Smith spoke before the Congregational Club of New York last week on "The Sympathy of Nations," and in the course of his remarks said:—"Commercial differences can, should, and undoubtedly will be settled by arbitration, but it would fail in a case where a nation's honour had been injured, where the controversy was one in which the people felt that their manhood had been insulted by an affront offered to their country. War has not been without its virtues. It has done more than anything else to elevate our standard of humanity. As a proof of this, witness the kindly treatment of the wounded and of prisoners in recent wars and compare that treatment with the horrible butcheries of wounded and prisoners in the earlier conflicts. The wars of America, and I speak as an Englishman, certainly have been necessary and resulted in incalculable good, which could only have been accomplished by strife.

The new magazine rifle for the British army has been adopted with complete unanimity, and will soon be turned out with great rapidity. The trials of the weapon in India have been in all respects satisfactory. A compressed powder is now used which gives good results, and with which the rifle (which is to be sighted for 2,800 yards) may be used up to 500 yards without raising the backsight. But a new powder is being experimented upon by which it is expected that the power of the rifle will be much increased.

The prize meeting of the National Rifle Association will, it is finally decided, take place once more on Wimbledon Common next July. The arrangements for the acquisition of the Brookwood, or Bisley Common site, for subsequent meetings are now virtually complete, and under these circumstances the Duke of Cambridge has consented to waive any objection to the use of Wimbledon Common for the meeting of the present year.

In his speech at the Brooklyn dinner in honour of Secretary Tracy lately ex-Mayor Low said: "When I was in England in 1886 I chanced to sit next to a gentleman who had been a midshipman in the British navy at the time when Farragut was in Europe in the flagship *Franklin*. One day, he told me, he commanded the boat which took the sturdy old admiral back to his own flagship from the flagship of the English admiral. As they broke away from the side of the heavily armed vessel Admiral Farragut said to me: 'Young gentleman, if you live you will see the armor come off the sides of ships just as it has come off the sides of men.'" This accords with the opinion we have always held. Admiral Farragut's remark was strictly in accord with the analogy of history. Armor for soldiers was rejected because the increase in the offensive power of weapons made it useless, and the present tendency in naval warfare is in the same direction.

## The Militia in Parliament.

When the estimates of Militia expenditure were being voted in the House of Commons on Friday evening, one interesting discussion occurred, from the Hansard report of which the following passages are extracted:

When the Militia estimates were being discussed in the House on Friday evening last, there was a very interesting discussion on a few important points, notably in connection with the schools. The discussion is reported pretty fully in this issue, so that our readers everywhere may note what has been done by the representatives in Parliament in the way of influencing the House on their behalf.

The school system came in for not a little criticism, and this by members supporting the government, and having therefore no political ends to serve by the course they followed. It was with pleasure we noted that the members who spoke on the school system were almost unanimous in support of changes time and again advocated in the MILITIA GAZETTE. Col. Dennison spoke strongly in favor of allowing other than officers to qualify for officers' certificates at the schools, and favored a return to the old cadet system. Mr. Barron, speaking from his experience of that system, advocated it also. The objection urged against such a change was that the discipline of the schools would suffer. We fancy however, that the military schools are as well able to maintain order as any other educational institutions; and while military discipline is rather more rigid than that governing universities and colleges, it would be more preferable that it should be relaxed a little if by such action we could have trained at these schools any considerable number of young men now excluded from them. Provided that young officers of the force are taught and know their drill, their own good sense will serve to enable them to maintain discipline in the ranks of their companies and to behave themselves while on duty.

It was pointed out by Lt.-Col. Kirkpatrick that a great number of officers of rural corps were prevented from attending at the schools by the expense attendant upon taking a course, this expense being largely augmented by the necessity for equipping themselves with a new dress to be worn when at the school mess. Now it is not absolutely necessary to have a new dress—a point urged whenever this objection has been raised—but all attached officers are required to join in the mess at the schools, and none of fine feelings would feel quite comfortable appearing at the feasts daily without the festal garment; and thus parading their poverty or economy before their more affluent or more liberal fellow mess men. The remedy suggested was that such attached officers as so desired should be allowed to live out of barracks, and attend the schools only for the necessary instruction. There was no encouragement held out that any such change as this was possible, but if the officers for whom they were established are to be got to attend it will have to be made.

There were many other points touched upon in the discussion, as will be seen by a reference to the report, and a further debate on military affairs is promised when information asked for on votes not yet passed is brought down.