

sioned officer he cannot enjoy the honour or privileges attaching to an officer's position, he might at least be put more on an equality with the officers in the matter of pay. Our correspondent brings to notice again the exclusiveness of the military schools, where it is not permitted to militiamen desiring to receive instruction as non-commissioned officers, and ambitious to at some future time take officers' commissions, to make one schooling—one graduation—do. One must fit himself out as an officer before he is permitted to receive an education as such—though no one would think of, for instance, requiring a person intending to enter the legal profession, to set up an office and proclaim himself to the world as a barrister, before admitting him to the study of the law. How the present school system operates is shown by the fact that there are at present about eight hundred unqualified officers in the force.

The Annual Militia Report—IV.

The Musketry Instructors' reports contained in the annual publication of the Militia Department call for serious consideration. Only five of these officers have, it seems, gone to the trouble to make reports, but it is to be hoped such attention will be paid to their recommendations that next year the Musketry Instructor at each camp will feel encouraged to commit to writing his experience and the improvements in the system which suggest themselves to him.

To take the reports in the order in which they appear, we find first that of Capt. Thos. R. Coogan, of the 24th Batt., who was instructor to the camp of No. 1 District, held at Stratford. He says:

"The firing this year is only moderate, on account of the great number of men who fired for the first time with a Government rifle or I believe with any other rifle.

"With few exceptions the men seemed to know very little if anything about the firing exercise. They are not to blame for this want of knowledge. I consider there is no better material to be found in the 'whole world' for the making of good soldiers than is comprised in our Canadian volunteers, if properly handled and instructed in the duties of a soldier, and it is, I consider, the duty of company officers and non-commissioned officers to give more attention (at the company headquarters) to the instruction of the men of their respective companies in the firing exercise, position drill and aiming drill. If this most important part of a soldier's training is neglected, it is not to be expected that the men will make good or even fair shooting.

"I strongly recommend that before the men are permitted to fire with ball, that they be practised to fire with blank cartridge, from five to ten rounds each man, with a view to give steadiness, and to accustom him to the recoil which takes place on the explosion of the powder.

"A very great many of the rifles in use are unserviceable and in a high degree dangerous to the firer.

"In nearly every case officers commanding companies did not comply with the instructions contained in the Company Target Practice Returns, and appear to have exercised not a particle of care in filling them in, which will be seen on referring to the returns, as they were all more or less incomplete and very inaccurate."

It will be noticed that Capt. Coogan's proposed remedy is that the men should receive instruction at their company headquarters. But if they are to drill at company headquarters as well as in camp, it is but fair to ask for an extra allowance of pay. Many companies now drill voluntarily, but many more do not. As to the carelessness of the company officers it may have been studied rather than accidental, the shooting, perhaps, having been too "moderate" to record.

The next instructor heard from is Captain James Adam, one of the best and most widely known shots in the Dominion. He officiated at the camp of No. 2 District, held at Niagara, and this is the most interesting part of what he says:

"Six corps, viz., the 12th, 34th, 35th, 36th, 37th and 77th performed their target practice at 100, 200, 300 and 400 yards, five rounds at each range; the highest average of any company was made by "A" Company, 34th Battalion, whose figure of merit was 50.02, which is extraordinarily good shooting. The same battalion also made the highest average figure of merit, 37.49; the brigade figure of merit was 31.88, which I consider very good, as 80 per cent of the men never fired before, and it was

quite apparent that they had little or no musketry instruction or position drill in their battalions at headquarters.

"I would recommend that all battalions should have a competent musketry instructor and sergeant instructor who would give special attention to the preliminary musketry instruction and position drill, and to further this very important part of a soldier's education each non-commissioned officer and man ought to be supplied, and obliged to fire, sixty rounds of ball cartridge every year at headquarters before coming to camp, and twenty at camp.

"That the system of offering badges or prizes for good shooting be resumed, as it would have a tendency to make the men more eager to shoot well, and more careful in shooting."

Another recommendation of instruction at headquarters is contained in the above, it will be noticed. Captain Adam would have the men taught at home and examined in camp. The next instructor heard from is Major C. W. Radiger, of the Victoria Rifles. His comments also take the form of regret. This is what he says of the shooting powers of the 5th Cavalry, and the 11th, 54th, 58th and 79th Battalions:

"I regret that the brigade figure of merit ($28\frac{1}{4}$) is not higher, and attribute it in a great measure to the limited amount of time available for position drill. Those whom I found time to correct when at the ranges, as a rule showed good results, but the morning parade as recommended does not give sufficient time for this teaching. I would most respectfully suggest that, especially in camps where the detail has to be given both in French and English, an assistant instructor be allowed. This would enable corps to have one day of position drill before proceeding to the target practice."

As Major Radiger supervised the practice of 1,062 men, his suggestion that there should be an assistant instructor cannot be considered an extravagant one. In No. 6 districts the instructor was Captain Charles Bosse. He too, complains of incomplete returns handed in by the company officers, but of those returns filed he says:

"You will notice that many men did not fire at 300 and 400 yards who had not hit the targets at 100 and 200. This was done by my instructions, as many of these men, not having had sufficient instruction at 100 yards, were not only inefficient but dangerous at the longer ranges. In my opinion more instruction should be given to recruits at 100 yards than has hitherto been allowed."

It should be the soldier's ambition to be "dangerous at the longer ranges"—but to the enemy, not his own comrades or the neutral populace. It would add not a little to the discomforts of war if one had to wage it in such perilous company.

Ontario and Quebec have spoken as above. The next and only other province heard from, through the Musketry Instructors is Nova Scotia. Of his experience at Camp Aldershot, Lieut.-Col. James D. Irving says:

"The practice was conducted on the same principles as was that of last year, viz., no man being allowed to fire until he had first been as carefully instructed in aiming and position drill, as the limited time at our disposal would allow, and all weak shots being required to fire over again at the shorter ranges.

"The necessity of thorough Musketry Instruction becomes more apparent each year. Very many of the recruits coming in have no knowledge whatever of how to use their rifles, the sending of whom to the targets without previous instruction therein being only a waste of time and a useless expenditure of ammunition. Were it for no other reason than to allow of this instruction being more effectually given than it is at present, it would be, I respectfully submit, a sufficient one for increasing the number of days of annual drill.

"The large proportion of third class shots shown by the returns, again forces the conclusion that it is high time something were done to improve the shooting of the mass of our militia force other than that afforded by means of the various Rifle Associations, whose annual Prize Meetings with the encouragement they afford for practice and individual effort, do not, most certainly, reach the class of men who come into Camp. I hope yet to see your suggestion for the granting of a few money prizes for company competition at the annual Camps acted upon by the Department."

Such reports as these have for years been presented to Parliament annually by the Minister of Militia, but they have been received without comment. Of late, however, there has been a disposition shown to pay more attention to the country's defensive resources, and we fancy that