

out for a march on the first holiday. Or if you belong to a mounted arm of the service, a few hours in the saddle would set your liver all right.

Your obedient servant,

Quebec, 25th Feb., 1891.

STADACONA.

"DRILLED V. UNDRILLED OFFICERS."

EDITOR MILITIA GAZETTE,—To come straight to the point this time and stick to it: "C. F. C." thinks he can cure the ills of the militia by a plaster of more stringent regulations, directed against the officers. It is not necessary for me to defend the officers as they are of course perfectly capable of taking care of themselves, but suppose that C. F. C. succeeded in passing a law that all uncertified officers at once retire and that all vacancies be filled from the non-commissioned ranks, would the non-coms. accept commissions? I say the majority would not, because they haven't money enough to do it. There are plenty of vacancies and it does not require any new laws or reorganization to enable some of C. F. C.'s highly qualified and willing non-coms. to step forward and upward. The question of finance, which he says is foreign to this subject, is really the only obstacle. It is a fact that an officer, without making any attempt to "buy popularity" must spend a very great deal more than the average sergeant or corporal could think of doing.

I am sorry that C. F. C. understood me as defending the picnic element. If I have a grievance it is the picnic trip and I sincerely hope that General Herbert will be able to work his scheme of making the holiday parades good practical field days. I say that we are merely playing at soldiers, but let us play the game and not mix it up with the boyish picnic. I still say that the city battalions are practically military athletic clubs, but they are good enough battalions at the price; Canada wants a cheap article and apparently she is satisfied that what she has can do her work.

I think from his fondness for ponderous missiles that C. F. C. must be in the "Batillery." I never was under artillery fire and if it is anything like a sappaling as having terrific latin phrases hurled at one's head, then "give us peace in our time." I don't mind so much having an argumentative bullet put through me in a neat and marksmanlike manner, but I think shells, especially when they explode in latin, are cruelty.

Yours, &c.,

SERGEANT.

THE MANITOBA RIFLE ASSOCIATION.

EDITOR MILITIA GAZETTE—There is an ancient saying that "He who puts his hands to the plough and turns back, will be pursued by furies." We have put our hands on the plough. We have tried to plough a straight furrow, and if we have even as much as glanced over either shoulder let the furies follow, and welcome. It is every man's duty to be just and honourable, and as this is probably the last time that your correspondent will speak of this affair, we trust that we shall not speak without effect, not only in justice to the Association, but to its "cause." For several years shooting affairs have been on the wane in Manitoba, which to those interested has become a source of regret, and as is usual in such cases, grumbling and dissatisfaction resulted. As man is a grumbler any way, but little notice is generally paid to this kind of individual, although we might just say right here that it is the lowest, first, illiterate style of expressing grievance. But as time wore on and grumbling gave place to protest, and protest to straight open charges, then the thinking, deducing mind was forced into a search for the cause. It has been urged by the powers that be that money has not been as plentiful as in the good

old days. It has also been argued that outsiders have felt they were at a disadvantage firing on a local range, so that to meet a generally expressed wish from competitors outside the city, the Association felt it their duty to have the competition at Stoney Mountain—thirteen miles distant from Winnipeg—and were therefore put to greater expense. Then it was further believed that as a considerable amount was contributed by our own people, the said Association felt under obligation to entertain and give them a good time, and therefore the Association was unable to do as much as it had done in the past, and that the competitors were grumblers anyway. Now these are the principal arguments used by the authority on the side of the Council. Let us consider them. We cannot agree with our friends that money has been less plentiful than in the past. It is more plentiful; but, to qualify, it may have been so with the M. R. A. Why? Do we contribute to that which is unsatisfactory? And money donated for shooting has no right to be deflected from that purpose by anyone, however well intentioned. But we believe more. We are assured that Manitoba's interest in rifle shooting is expressed in her representatives at the Dominion matches, and that, and that largely, is the secret of all the trouble. It has been felt that the M. R. A. intended to discontinue sending a team to the annual rifle tournament at Ottawa; nay, some have said so. As regards the second plea, that outsiders desired the matches at Stoney Mountain. This is a question which can be disposed of in a very few words. Naturally an outsider would say so, so do a great many Winnipeggers. But how many outsiders attended our matches last year? Not more than fifteen! Facts are stubborn things. Is it not painful to think that a whole Association had to be transported thirteen miles for such a few? and I venture to say that even those gentlemen, while desiring it, were not anxious for it. And the expense of running the match, which took four days to do fourteen hours actual shooting, was as much if not more than the prize list. We cannot give figures yet, as it is nigh on two years since a financial statement has been made by our Association. As for the third idea, about entertaining, we cordially agree. Let us entertain. No place could possibly be nicer than a rifle range for entertainment for lovers of that sport. The M. R. A. offers an entertainment in the way of a series of rifle competitions. Let us make it as entertaining as possible. But—allow me to emphasize that *but*—we want no foreign elements there; I don't want to particularize—allow that word *element* to cover. Speaking generally these three questions require no straight answer. The best in them we all agree on; the worst in them is disguised under a show of reason. We must have results. If we step on a street car it is to reach some point desired. If we have a rifle association it is to develop and encourage rifle shooting. We maintain that ours was not only a failure last year, but the means resorted to to elect the council were dishonourable. The clause in the constitution which governs the election of the council, reads as follows: That any person being a subscriber of two dollars (\$2.00) per annum and paying the same before the completion of the annual matches, shall become a member of the association for the current association year and shall be entitled to a vote at the annual meeting." In the face of this clause and under strong protest from the practical riflemen at that meeting, the present council was elected by a packed meeting of those who take no interest in rifle shooting, except it be to be *entertained* at the matches. It will readily be seen why the council is incompetent. They are the product of an ignorant ballot. We wish it to be understood that personally the council are all gentlemen (we wish to plough our furrow straight), that a few of them are practical riflemen, but the election of the latter few was an accident; they were woefully in the minority, and, strive as they might, could not accomplish much among such odds. To sum