

THE CANADIAN MILITIA GAZETTE

A WEEKLY JOURNAL DEVOTED TO THE INTERESTS OF THE ACTIVE FORCE OF THE DOMINION.

First Year.
VOL. I, No. 22.

Ottawa, Tuesday, 6th October, 1885.

\$1.50 per Annum in advance
Single Copies Five Cents.

CORRESPONDENCE.

The MILITIA GAZETTE aims at being the recognized medium of instruction and information for Canadian militiamen and rifle shots. Communications on the subjects to which its pages are devoted are respectfully invited. Anonymous communications will not be regarded. No name will be published, except with the writer's consent. The editors will not be responsible for the views of correspondents.

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THE CANADIAN MILITIA GAZETTE,
Box 316, OTTAWA, Canada.

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COMMENT AND CRITICISM.

A perusal of the conditions of the several matches at Creedmoor will lead one to the conviction that either the Americans or ourselves have a wrong idea as to the best means of promoting rifle shooting, for the two systems are so radically different that both cannot be right; and we submit that to keep men hammering away for days at standing matches at 200 yards must get dreadfully monotonous, besides not being calculated to develop a man's judgment as to wind and elevation at varying distances. The system, too, of selecting the best scores and taking two or three of them together for a prize is something altogether foreign to us, where a man has to stand or fall by his first effort.

We cannot help thinking that for training that would fit a man for the rough and tumble work of actual campaigning, our competitions, at ever changing ranges, under ever changing conditions of light, wind and elevation, with aggregate matches where good and bad scores have all to go in to make up the competitor's final standing, are infinitely preferable, imperfect as we know them to be in simulating the conditions of actual warfare, to the Creedmoor system, and perhaps if we were copied a little more closely, the U. S. national association might have less reason to complain of diminished interest in the matches.

When any trouble arises between the militia authorities and the force it is, in nine cases out of ten, due to the want of discipline.

Many cases can be called to mind where corps have indignantly resented the strictures of an inspecting officer, and caused considerable unpleasantness thereby. It would be much more to the purpose if they were to examine into the faults pointed out and try to remedy them, for when the day comes that those in command are afraid to say what they think, and will content themselves with a little faint commendation, the case of the force will indeed be lamentable. What is wanted is strict criticism and plain talking, to drive away undue conceit, and the corps that will take the criticisms most seriously are likely to become the most efficient.

This week we publish further details from the camps of instruction, by which it will be seen that strenuous efforts have been made to profit by the lessons of last spring, and to pay extra attention to the most practical points of military service. This is particularly evidenced by the prominence given to musketry instruction, to the direction of the drills by the commandants, and to the examinations of officers. We hope when reports are in from all the district camps that there may arise some discussion as to the best methods of conducting future camps, and we propose saying something on this subject ourselves later. We are indebted to the *Amherst Gazette* for most of the information respecting the Nova Scotia camp.

We should have explained in our last issue that the militia in British Columbia are armed wholly with the Short Snider rifle, which is usually considered to be inferior to the longer arm at the long ranges, and this probably may help to account for some of the low scores. It will have been noticed that the representative team match in the B. C. meeting was won by a civilian team. We are sorry to see by this that many of the best shots in the Province are not enrolled militiamen. Let the association in future close all the good matches against civilians and see if it will not have the effect of inducing them to join the force. Once a man has acquired the taste for match shooting he will take a good deal of trouble to qualify himself for it.

The volunteer force is again demonstrating its usefulness by the readiness with which the Montreal corps have responded to the call to arms, to protect their city's peace and property against the stupid malice of the anti-vaccination mobs. That this extreme measure should have become necessary is almost incomprehensible, and serves to show that it is impossible to predict when, or against whom, an armed force may be required, and the consequent necessity that exists for continual preparation and vigilance.

This week's general orders show that fifteen new officers have been appointed and five officers previously appointed have been promoted, while the service has lost seventeen for various causes; being a net loss of two officers. Most of the changes have been in the junior ranks, but we notice that Lieut.-Col. Rodier, who has commanded the 76th "Vol-tigeurs de Châteauguay" since 1875 has retired retaining rank, and as both majorities were vacant, and few of the captains are qualified, there