

CORRESPONDENCE.

NORTH-WEST DEFENCES.

To the Editor of the Canadian Militia Gazette :

DEAR SIR, - Reports are now constantly appearing in the newspapers of the Indians in the North-west being turbulently inclined, and that more trouble with them is to be expected.

The settlers must be protected, and the government just has to look the matter squarely in the face, and at once prepare for the emergency.

The present force of mounted police and permanent corps now on duty there, all told, is insufficient; therefore, a "special" force should be raised for that particular purpose. The Indians saw and felt a powerful force last spring, which to their ideas has completely disappeared, as if it had never existed. Now to keep them quiet a strong force must be present, and visible to their eyes.

Now look at the so-called forts scattered throughout the territory. What are they? Simply stockades, and some of them not even that. There should be built good strong forts of stone, or wood and earth, capable of holding, say 500 men each, or rather large enough to be used as refuges for the districts in which they are situated. Build them in commanding situations at Qu'Appelle, Prince Albert, Battleford, Edmonton, Calgary, Pitt, McLeod, Walsh Wood Mountain, and wherever needed. Arm them with some of the 24-pounder smooth-bore guns, howitzers and carronades, now lying rotting in the mud at Quebec and elsewhere, and with a good supply of ammunition, shell and cannister. Also for offensive operations each fort should contain one or more field guns complete, rifled, if possible; but there are plenty of bronze smooth-bores in the country which would be better than nothing. Place in each a good strong garrison and extra small arms sufficient to arm the settlers. Besides this the commandant of each fort should be ordered to raise militia companies in his district, and have them out once a year for training at the fort with the guns and small arms. These fortifications, as well as the necessary roads and bridges, could be cheaply built by employing as laborers Half-breeds and Indians at little cost over their food. All the plans and specifications could be made at the Royal Military College, and passed cadets employed in superintending their construction, with a requisite staff of mechanics. I hope these suggestions may result in some action being taken.

RANGER.

MEDALS FOR THE FENIAN RAIDS.

To the Editor of the Canadian Militia Gazette :

SIR, - A good many letters have appeared in your columns relative to medals and clasps being given to those who took active part in the suppression of the rebellion in the North-west last spring. Medals are to be given by the Home Government to all those who were fortunate enough to be there. Now, what I want is to enlist your sympathies and support for the purpose of getting medals for those of our volunteers who took part in repelling the invasions of 1866 and 1870. It may be said that it is the Imperial authorities that have granted the medal for the North-west; then surely the Canadian Government ought to feel grateful enough toward those who preserved the country on two different occasions from invasions, either of which had it been successful at the first would have been difficult to subdue.

My opinion is that a medal for those who served in the repelling of an invasion would certainly be no more invidious than one given for the suppression of a rebellion amongst our own people. I should like to hear what you have to say about it, also the opinions of the force.

I've no doubt that if the matter was brought before "the House" in its right light the medals would be forthcoming.

I might say that in the days of Fenian raids nothing was heard of officers and men getting special pay, clothing and allowances, not to mention land grants; - they got the word and were off to the front in what they stood in.

There would be a precedent for giving medals for repelling invasions, as I believe a medal was granted to those who served in 1812.

Dec. 14, 1885.

FUSHER.

HONORS FOR THOSE WHO WERE AT THE FRONT.

To the Editor of the Canadian Militia Gazette :

SIR, - I have been reading the letters of "Volunteer," "Odd File" and others, respecting "honors for those who were at the front," and cannot help regretting, as a volunteer, that they should ever have been written, for I do not believe, as the reading of those letters would lead one to suppose, that such small-souled, petty feelings of jealousy can exist to any extent amongst the men who took part in the campaign of last summer. There are always, of course, some sore heads and grumblers in every relationship of life, and I have no doubt that the North-west field force was no exception to this rule; their feelings may find vent in such letters as these, but I cannot believe that they, in the least degree, give expression to the feelings of the great majority of those "who were at the front."

As I understand it, medals are generally given to all officers and men who have taken part in a campaign, and in addition thereto, clasps, bearing the names of the different engagements (not necessarily successful) which may have taken place, are given to those who were actually present in the engagement for which the clasp is issued. The issue of clasps is regulated by the authorities, who decide with reference to each campaign, for which engagements, if any, clasps shall be given. For the North-west campaign, the Imperial Government have (most appropriately) granted a medal, but have not (for very good reasons of their own, no doubt,) seen fit to grant any clasps, though there were five engagements, including Duck Lake and Frenchman's Butte. Surely (there being no clasps) "we who were at Batoche," and who happened to be under fire, cannot expect (as was advocated by one of your correspondents) to exclude all others from receiving the medals? It is not their fault that no clasps are to be given. Did they not all serve in the campaign? and cannot we suppose that they sacrificed quite as much in giving up their homes and occupations to serve their

country in time of need, as even those who were at Batoche? By the fortunes of war, the latter got to the front and were under the enemy's fire, while the former were compelled to garrison Battleford, Edmonton, Qu'Appelle and other places, and even "to do sentry-go around the C.P.R. car sheds," but have we not the word of the general himself for it (at the Ottawa banquet), that the one did their duty as well as the other, and that the latter were as necessary in their place as the former? Can anyone say then that those who did not happen to be at Batoche or in any of the other engagements, cannot be considered as having taken part in the campaign, and so are not entitled to the medal? "Firebag" says that, in the event of the medal being given to all, and no clasps issued in addition, the only alternative to those regiments who were at the front will be "to leave their breasts as bare as the day on which they went into the fight," an opinion, sir, which I think will not tend to elevate "Firebag" in the estimation of anyone, and an idea which I do not believe that any battalion that took part in the North-west campaign would demean itself by entertaining seriously for one moment. Though I was not fortunate enough to be under fire myself, I may honestly say that I greatly regret that the Imperial Government have not seen their way clear towards issuing clasps with the medal, for I feel that all those men who acquitted themselves so nobly under the enemy's fire are well deserving of extra distinction, after the orthodox method, but as the government do not feel themselves in a position to give any clasps, let the situation be accepted in a manly and generous spirit; "Firebag" and "Odd File" may rest well assured that the wearing of the Imperial medal by those who were not "at the front" will in no wise detract from the credit and honor due to those who were there. In conclusion, Mr. Editor, I must again express my regret that such letters have been written, as they not only reflect no credit upon the writers, but are very apt to bring discredit upon the military force generally.

"OTTAWA."

THE ENCOURAGEMENT OF SHOOTING IN BATTALIONS.

To the Editor of the Canadian Militia Gazette :

DEAR SIR, - It has occurred to me that we might increase the shooting capacity of the Militia force if we were to adopt some scheme to coax the majority of the rank and file to take more interest in rifle shooting. As for myself I have been an habitué of the butts for more years than I care to remember, but I do not observe any increase in the number of competitors. There are too few new men every year, spite of Nursery matches and such like. Suppose we try something like this:

Offer a reasonably good prize in money (not less than \$300) for the best shooting battalion of six companies - not less than 200 men to compete. Ranges, 200, 300, and 400 yards; rounds, 20 or 30 altogether; no sighting shots; time, June and July; the competition to take place wherever most convenient, either at head-quarters or camp; details to be arranged by a committee.

I am going to ask the P. Q. R. A. to try this notion for one year, and wish you would publish this so that we may get the views of some of our Quebec riflemen on the subject.

JOHN MARTIN,
Treasurer, P. Q. R. A.

MONTREAL, Dec. 16th, 1885.

QUERIES AND REPLIES.

Q. What are the regulations as to the kind of fur for infantry officers' caps, gloves, and the trimming on overcoats? - J. B. McL., 31st Batt.

A. There are no regulations for winter clothing. The only regulation the Canadian militia have to guide them in this respect is contained in par. 985 R. and O., 1879, for the milled cloth overcoat with caps. If a battalion wishes to adopt fur the best thing they can do is to get special permission from headquarters. The regular infantry regiments when in Canada wore dark gray Persian lamb, similar to that now worn by the R.M.C. cadets.

Q. Would you be kind enough to give a list of the names as they stand in the Wimbledon team for 1886. - WIMBLEDON, Toronto.

A. You will find the names in No. 18 of the GAZETTE, second column of page 141. Capt. Corbin falls under the five year rule; thus making Lieut. Russell with 331 points, 20th man. It should be noted that Lieut. Maxwell, who has been credited as belonging to the 50th Batt., really is a member of the H.G.A., and that Col. Gilson has 329 points, and should be promoted to 27th place. When more is known about the composition of the team we will reprint the names.

Q. What amount of pay was a brigade quartermaster-sergeant in the late North-west expedition entitled to; also how much was a non-com. officer employed on brigade duty entitled to? - ENQUIRER, Toronto.

A. There is no regulation to cover this class of n.c.o. As a matter of fact they were paid similarly to the same grades of regimental staff n.c.o., for which rates see R. and O., 1883.

Report speaks of the new rifle as being anything but the perfect weapon which Enfield supposed it to be; and we believe some little time will elapse before it is practically tested. - Army and Navy Gazette.

Mr. Wainwright, who was on active service during the rebellion with the 90th Battalion, and who attempted suicide in Toronto two or three weeks ago, died at the hospital on the 9th.

Lieut. McAuslan's shooting career has been a long and brilliant one. On the evening of the presentation he wore on his tunic two "Prince of Wales" badges, two "Queen's Sixty," three "Kolapore cups," two "United Service," five "International," one "West of Scotland Championship," three "West of Scotland Twenty," two bronze medals, "Scottish Twenty Club," and three N.R.A. "Grand Aggregate badges." - U. S. Record.