

# THE CANADIAN MILITIA GAZETTE

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MISCELLANEOUS.

## Prepare for the Parliament.

Another session of Parliament being near at hand, now is the time for the militia officers—and militia men too, for that matter—to remind their parliamentary representatives of the needs of the force in each particular district, or in the country generally, so that the legislator may enter upon his sessional duties with a clear understanding of the grievances and the desires of this important element in his constituency. We say important, because it should be so in every sense, if it is not. The members of the force as such take no part in politics, but as citizens it is their duty to exert every legitimate influence to further the interests of the body in which they serve, and their sons after them may be expected to serve, in the country's defence.

There is a blue book called the Annual Report of the Militia Department. This volume contains every year a mass of criticism, suggestion and recommendations from the skilled officers holding the highest positions in the force. It is not printed for the use of the Minister. He has the opportunity of seeing the contents before they get into print. The Report is printed really for the information of the Minister's master the Parliament, and for the information of the Parliament's master, the People. Being called upon to pay the salaries of the high military officers whose recommendations form part of these Annual Reports, the People have a right to be told year by year whether these recommendations are or are not to be given effect to; and if not, then the reason for ignoring the professional advice. The proper way to elicit the information is by means of questions asked upon the floor of Parliament. These should not be put in any hostile spirit, but with the sole desire to have the Minister state to the House, in the fullest detail, the true state of the affairs of his department. He should have nothing to hide; he should, and no doubt does, court the fullest investigation. If there is to be criticism of the Government's treatment of the militia, let it be made with the responsibility attaching to the utterances of a Member of Parliament, and in a place where it can be authoritatively met or answered by the Government, or by the Minister having charge of that department.

Our advice then to militiamen throughout the country is to get local members at work upon the Militia Report for 1887; they need not wait for that of 1888 to appear. Let them study up its contents, and learn—if not being military men they do not at once comprehend—the significance of what is seen there. Impress it upon them that the welfare of the militia deserves some little attention in the House other than when, towards the close of the session, the estimates are being rushed through. The subject should be introduced at the very beginning, when the House sits for an hour or less a day for want presumably of something to talk about. In the past it has been too often the case that Parliament has

taken no notice whatever of the recommendations of the Reports and the failure to give effect to them. The militia throughout the country have it in their power to see that a new practice is introduced.

Col. Rhodes, of Quebec, who has just been chosen by Premier Mercier as Commissioner of Agriculture for Quebec, was born in Yorkshire in 1824, his father being Capt. Rhodes, of the 19th Light infantry. He was educated in France and came to Canada in 1844 as an officer of the 68th Regiment. When he retired from the army he settled in Quebec, joining the militia with rank of Lieutenant-Colonel, when he had married Miss Dunn, of that city. Col. Rhodes will seek election in Megantic, the date of the contest being fixed at the 27th inst.

A feature of the Christmas number of the Brantford *Telegram* is a sketch of the history of the 38th Battalion, Dufferin Rifles of Canada, a smart organization not without due appreciation in Brantford and vicinity. Two illustrations appear with the sketch; one the special regimental badge, bearing with the title "Dufferin Rifles" the crest and motto of the Earl of Dufferin, by the special permission of His Lordship when Governor-General of Canada. The other illustration is an excellent portrait of the popular commanding officer, Col. C. S. Jones, and constituting one of the handsomest features of the decidedly handsome Christmas number.

Delay in deciding upon the form of cartridge to be used will postpone the distribution of the Lee repeater to the English army for some time. The Secretary of State for War in a recent address at a public meeting said the pattern of the new magazine rifle had been decided upon, and before long he hoped to issue to the army a rifle which it was believed was superior to any rifle now in course of manufacture by any foreign country. The Government, too, saw their way to the early introduction of a high explosive for the use of big guns, the destructive effects of which were described to him as extraordinary.

In concluding lately a series of articles in the *Chicago Times*, on "Implements of War," Lieut. Philip Reade, U.S.A., said: "The conservatism that clings to officers in the matter of change of armament, even of ammunition, is no new thing. It took hundreds of years to enable gunpowder weapons to supersede the pike, the cross bow and the long bow. The percussion cap was scouted by Gen. Winfield Scott and other veterans who were used to the flint lock. In 1861 our chief of ordnance, Gen. James W. Ripley, protested against the purchase of any more metallic cartridges and breech loaders. Gov. Jeremiah Rusk of Wisconsin, is quoted as believing that the surviving members of the Grand Army of the Republic are able to—as in 1861-1865—defeat any enemy that the world can array against them, however armed with accurate shooting rifles. New Daniels have come to judgment, however. New facts in the laws of projectiles have been discovered. New propositions have been evolved, and new corollaries have arisen from them. It is conceded that we must have coast defences. Let those who have that matter in charge struggle to its success. The need for exhaustive experiment in order to the development of the highest power in the best modern military rifle is equally great."