

# THE CANADIAN MILITIA GAZETTE

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### REGIMENTAL NEWS.

## Topics of the Week.

The annual report of the Ontario Artillery Association for 1888, which has just been issued, is an exceedingly interesting publication, containing a variety of useful information in addition to the looked for official statements. The Secretary, Mr. L. H. Irving, seems to have gone about its compilation with the painstaking enthusiasm characteristic of him. The report is not only creditably compiled but very neatly printed.

Major Van Wagner makes out a strong case for the Hamilton Field Battery in the correspondence on the subject of the field battery handicap, appearing in this issue. His battery undoubtedly has a grievance, and few impartial observers of the record will be disposed to deny that had all chances been even in the competitions the battery might have borne for the year the proud title of the most efficient in the Dominion. Fate having ruled otherwise, we trust that the disappointment will not be taken so much to heart as the concluding sentences of his letter would imply, and that next next summer Major Van Wagner's splendid battery will again be found in friendly competition with those of all Canada, under such carefully revised conditions that the best may have a greater likelihood of securing the honours and emoluments of first place.

A correspondent, writing on the sergeant-major's position in our militia, inferentially contests the views expressed on the subject in this paper a couple of weeks ago. We are told not only that he is supplied, free of charge, with all articles of clothing and equipment, but, further, that many of these are paid for by the officers. That is just where the trouble comes in. The sergeant-major, if he be a man of spirit, may not like to be beholden to the officers' private purses for his outfit, preferring to pay the cost himself, even though he can ill afford it. He is very apt to be a man who cannot well afford to give money as well as time, and it seems that the pay of his rank is not sufficient to cover the expenses. It is not reasonable to say that, because an officer is put to heavy expense, a sergeant-major should fare the same. It is comparatively easy to find officers who can afford the outlay; it is the reverse of easy to secure men with money to spare who are content to be sergeants-major.

"I was pleased," a Quebec friend writes the Editor, "to read your article on the necessity of removing the Royal School of Infantry from St. John's; also your remarks on the proposal of the Government to confer pensions on the Mounted Police, and the necessity of doing the same for the permanent militia. Unless this is done the force will

continue to suffer from the large number of desertions. In it there are many pensioners from the Imperial army, and their good fortune causes the poor future of the Canadian soldier to be ever contrasted." The above is an extract from a letter written on a business matter, and not intended for publication, but we trust the writer will pardon its appearance in print. The sentiments are those expressed in letters from all quarters similarly received every week, and which go to show that matters pertaining to the government of the militia are beginning to receive greater attention from those most interested in the welfare of the force.

Inspired by the visit of a recruiting sergeant, a Montreal paper a few days ago wrote up some of the causes leading to enlistment in the permanent corps. "Drink is not without its influence," we are told; and, further, that "when a man enlists during a spree, his first thought when he comes to himself is to desert." A prominent officer named is quoted as saying that "a great many enlist as the outcome of a spree, and then, disgusted with themselves, desert." We sincerely hope the officer and the newspaper in question are not correct in these statements. We do not believe that any commandant of our permanent corps would countenance the enlistment of men "during a spree," or that recruits are so difficult to obtain that men are hurried into swearing away their service for three years without opportunity of sober consideration of whether or not it is to their advantage to join. Not only should the enlistment be the result of calm determination, but those who after a short trial profess a dislike of the military service should be allowed to leave without by desertion making themselves exiles from Canada.

We are glad to know that the 90th Rifles have obtained some Morris tubes and suitable targets, by means of which members of the battalion may be enabled to obtain rifle practice in a more convenient way than they have hitherto been able to do, owing to there being no government range at Winnipeg. This will likely be the means of many of the younger members being taught how to shoot, and, having their interest enlisted in the practice of their becoming—at least some of them who might not otherwise be so—prominent marksmen. It would be an excellent move for the Government to make a similar provision of Morris tubes for the Royal School of Mounted Infantry, at present without facilities for rifle practice owing to the want of a range.

In the Imperial House of Commons last week Lord George Hamilton, first lord of the Admiralty, stated that the Government was prepared to build eight first-class men-of-war of 14,000 tons each, and two of 9,000 tons, nine first class cruisers, twenty-nine smaller cruisers, four of the Pandora type of cruisers and eighteen of the sharpshooter type of torpedo vessels. The total tonnage of all these vessels will be 318,000, and the total cost £21,500,000. He asked that £10,000,000 be appropriated from the consolidated fund for the proposed increase of the navy, and that the remainder of the sum required be provided for in the ordinary estimates. He promised that the Admiralty's programme