

THE CANADIAN MILITIA GAZETTE

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COMMENT AND CRITICISM.

This year's meeting of the Dominion Rifle Association was a particularly hearty one, and the season's work has accordingly been begun with a "good send-off." His Excellency in his speech has made a couple of suggestions that should bear good fruit—the number of members should be increased to at least a thousand, and some of the numerous manufactories should come to the help of the association, as our banks have already done so liberally. The facts that one of our North-west districts has affiliated a provincial association at this early date in her history, and that British Columbia intends sending over a team to our matches both go to prove that the influence of the association is surely and steadily widening, and are matters on which, in common with her healthy financial state, the Dominion Association is to be congratulated.

The medals have come, and are safely deposited in the Militia Department's vaults, and we may say without vanity that our cut last week is a very faithful representation of their appearance. Those entitled to the medals must not think that they will be immediately distributed, for it will be no light task to engrave a name on the rim of each of between five and six thousand medals. Gentlemen of the field force, possess your souls in patience.

The winners of places on this year's Wimbledon team are reminded that a definite decision as to their intention of going or not is required by the 10th April. Those who know they cannot go should be particularly careful to make prompt and honest returns, for delay on their part is an injustice to every waiting man, shortening his time for preparing himself.

The Quebec *Chronicle* has again brought up the question which had already been asked more than once; whether, in view of the fact that Imperial rewards have on other occasions been freely bestowed on subordinate officers—as witness the Fenian raid of 1870 when Col. Chamberlin and Col. McEachern, as well as their commander in chief, were decorated—something might not be done in the interests of some of those gallant corps commanders who endured with General Middleton the hardships of the North-west campaign. The *Chronicle* adds: "If the officers who went to the North-west are to be decked out with ribbons and stars for distinguished conduct, we hope that the Deputy Minister of Militia, Col. Panet, and Co's. Powell and Macpherson, who did excellent work in the Canadian war office during the progress of the rebellion, will not be forgotten. They had a most difficult duty to perform, and much of the success of the expedition was due to their admirable management and promptness." These are not the sentiments of any one place or party; they are the sentiments of the whole community. We do not know whose place it is to see into the matter, but we do know that the proper steps taken towards recognizing the zeal and efficiency of these officers would be a most popular measure.

If all the officials of the Militia Department were as outspoken as Colonel Irwin and Colonel Denison in pointing out the weak spots in the departments under their supervision it could not but result in the ultimate improvement of the force, though it would not tend to render the officials in question popular at the time. It cannot be denied that the force as a whole is touchy about being rebuked, and that the man who will pat on the back indiscriminately all he comes in contact with will be voted a jolly good fellow; but there has been too much of that sort of thing, and towards arriving at efficiency, a little wholesome plain talking would be a salutary beginning. Who cannot point to some corps or individual officer within his own observation that is notoriously inefficient, but is notwithstanding kept upon the list, while not even a hint ever appears in the reports that anything is amiss? Such negligence, or worse, is demoralizing to the whole force, and should be remedied by more vigorous reports on the one hand, followed by vigorous action on the part of the Department.

To apply our remarks. Last week we gave a list of all the corps, showing specially how they were situated with regard to officers. Now would it not be well for the Departmental authorities to look over their lists and insist on the worst offenders at least—men who have held their positions for many years—qualifying or retiring? Again, (e.g.)