

ed upon for a good subscription to the company rifle match, the battalion match, the band fund, etc., etc. I am familiar with the officer who says, "Where must I go now?" or "What command shall I give next?" but I can easily forgive him that if I respect him otherwise.

Purchase may be abolished in the British Army, but it takes a man of independent means to be an officer just the same. Here a man practically buys his commission. I have served now in the ranks over six years; my pay goes into the company fund, and I have spent about \$15 per annum, exclusive of rifle shooting expenses, and exclusive of \$50 or so for a sergeant's outfit. I think I have done it pretty cheap. I could be an officer if I chose to increase my expenditure. I am told that in one of our cavalry corps it costs a trooper about \$100 for his uniform on joining, and an officer at least \$400. It is absolutely necessary that a Canadian officer should be popular, and he must also have a pretty fair income, I should say at least \$1,200 a year to spend on himself. He should know enough to prevent him making an ass of himself on parade, and he soon learns that. If it is asked that he be qualified to lead against regular troops, that is a standard that will never be attained in Militia, unless we adopt the Swiss system of conscription and six or eight weeks compulsory drill every year, and the Canadian taxpayer would kick about that.

Anyway, the company officer, especially in rural battalions, does not get any credit for qualifying, and he can get along almost, if not quite as well, without. I know a captain who a couple of months before camp got his men together and drilled them once or twice a week until the camp. He took out a smart company, but on reaching camp he began with the others at squad drill, in accordance with brigade orders. Seeing that his men were bored and discouraged by having to begin over, he went on to something else (skirmishing, I think), and got rapped over the knuckles with considerable force by the Brigade Major. The next camp he went to he took no trouble whatever beforehand. Why should not the captain and his staff be the instructors of the company, be held strictly responsible for its efficiency and get full credit for it? The company is the modern unit. Company drill and target practice could be done cheaper at the company headquarters than at camp. The work of the camps (which could then be shortened) would be (1) a very strict inspection in company drill; (2) battalion drill; (3) "manœuvre." This is practically the German system.

You cannot *compel* the men of the Militia to be efficient. They must be led by various means. For instance, large sums of money are spent in prizes of various kinds. The fact of the matter is that city battalions at least are military athletic clubs, and the men would not join in time of peace if it were otherwise. In the same way it is all rot to talk about compelling the officers to do anything. You can't drive any Canadian. The officers spend a lot of time and money now and are as efficient as other Militia officers in the Empire. If more is asked of them more must be given to them in the shape of honour and credit for what they do, if nothing can be done in a more material way.

Yours respectfully,

SERGEANT.

Toronto, 9th February, 1891.

EDITOR MILITIA GAZETTE.—I in common with C. F. C. often observe and peruse paragraphs in the various papers on Militia subjects, although I cannot say that they always afford me "great pleasure," but I have failed to observe any "apparently dull, stupid sleep of ignorance there is in respect to any serious evil existing in the Militia Force." That our Militia system is not perfect, and that it is desirable to improve it, I think no one will deny, but in suggesting schemes of improvement one must take into con-

sideration the varying conditions of climate; requirements, temperament of the inhabitants, end to be attained, "defence, not defiance," and the amount of money at the disposal of the Department. One must look beyond one's own little village, and not argue, because there may be a little sore there, that the whole system is rotten to the core. Even if it be a fact, that there are eight hundred commissions held by Militia officers who have no *certificate* of qualification, I am not prepared to admit that there are eight hundred unqualified officers, but rather agree with "Beaver" that many of them may be "far better up in all details of drill and discipline and better instructors" than some who have certificates. The regulations require that every officer should have a *certificate* of qualification, and it is desirable that the regulations should be complied with or cancelled. The country has, I think, provided as well as it can afford at the present time for the attainment of the qualifications required of officers, and the number must be very small indeed who cannot afford at some time during the year to spend seven days at some one of the military schools to obtain the required certificate. I think that the Regulations and Orders, para. 72 to 88, fully provides a remedy for the "serious evil" pointed out by C. F. C., and contains (if he will pardon me the opinion) in better language than his own, all that he suggests; and it only needs that commanding officers and the district staff should insist on the observance of the "first duty of a soldier"—"obedience to orders."

C. F. C. appears to think it was a "wise provision abolishing the purchase of commissions in the army by those who possessed more money than military qualification," and that it "was enacted with a view to exclude these unqualified persons," etc. I fail to see the connection between that and our Militia system, as we have had no purchase here; but even admitting that he is correct, perhaps he will permit me to hazard the opinion that the most glorious actions recorded in the annals of British military history were fought by officers a large number of whom had purchased their commissions, which would seem to show that because a man purchased his commission he was not necessarily unqualified. A thorough knowledge of mere barrack yard drill does not of itself qualify a man for command. It is possible for one to creditably command a brigade who is not thoroughly posted in all the minutiae of the latest approved squad drill and extension motions. To become an expert in military science requires as long and serious study and as much experience as is required in any of the learned professions, and it is possible for one to have all the necessary knowledge and yet not hold a certificate.

"Beaver's" suggestion that branch schools be opened in the different towns, would, I think, be found to be very expensive, and the officer who cannot find time enough to take a special course of seven days, is not likely to have time enough to spare for military duties to be of any service to the country. "Any drill is better than none; let us have the best that we can get; but let us have some, however poor," once said a C. O., and I think he was right.

As to the rifle question, the old answer still holds good, that the aim of the military authorities is not to encourage target practice *per se*, but to teach the militiaman how best to use the arm that he will have to carry into action.

With reference to the editorial comment, I cannot see why any one really desirous of being instructed for the purpose of obtaining a commission should object to accepting a provisional appointment and then entering some one of the schools, as already established. The acceptance of an appointment and the purchase of a uniform is a mild sort of guarantee that the country will derive some immediate benefit from his instruction.

And now, Mr. Editor, having had my "growl," I will leave the parade, promising, if not utterly annihilated, to call again.

ACDACE.