

# THE CANADIAN MILITIA GAZETTE

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## CONTENTS OF THIS NUMBER.

### TOPICS OF THE WEEK.

The Dominion Artillery Association.  
A pointer from Lord Stanley.  
Pacific coast defences.  
The campaign of the Ninth.  
Ontario's Cavalry School.  
D. R. A. council business.  
Plain talk by Sir Fred. Middleton.  
The Sergeant-Major's position.

### THE ANNUAL MILITIA REPORT—IV.

The Musketry Instructor's remarks.

### THE MILITIA AND THE CIVIL POWER.

Text of the bill now before parliament.

### DOMINION ARTILLERY ASSOCIATION.

Proceedings of the annual business meeting.

### CORRESPONDENCE.

That comprehensive challenge—*Pure Sport*.  
Fenian Raid distinctions—*Fenian Raid*.  
The Sergeant-Major's position—*A Sergeant-Major*.

### REGIMENTAL NEWS.

THE COOPER-CASHMERE RIFLE.

## Topics of the Week.

The meeting of the Dominion Artillery Association, reported in this issue, was one of the most lively held for several years, thanks to the Provincial Rights party—if we may be permitted the expression—who were present from Toronto to protest against what they considered a slight of the Ontario Association in not duly consulting its representative on the executive. It is a matter for congratulation that the vote of censure proposed did not carry, for it would have created a bad feeling not to be lightly removed. As the matter now stands, the grievance has been aired, cordial explanations have been offered and more or less cordially received, and everything is happy. This result is due in large measure to the timely advice of Lord Stanley, who sat out the meeting, which lasted nearly three hours, and showed uncommon interest in the proceedings.

That was a very valuable suggestion made by Lord Stanley in his address to the Dominion Artillery Association, concerning the sending of detachments to Halifax to receive from the Imperial forces there instruction in the use of garrison guns of modern type. The expense involved is comparatively small, because the greater part of the travelling would be done over the government railroad, and all that would have to be spent would be the daily pay and the living expenses of the detachments. To give effect to His Excellency's proposal would in great measure revive the interest in the garrison artillery branch, rapidly dwindling down to a skeleton in the Canadian force.

The British Columbia representatives in the Senate have brought to the notice of that body the defences of the Pacific province, on a motion asking for copies of the correspondence passing between the Canadian and Imperial Governments on the subject. Senator McInnes in his speech pointed out how timely was the consideration of the subject in view of the activity shown by Russia concerning her Pacific coast arsenal at Vladovistock and the war cloud hanging over Europe. He cited the passage in the Queen's Speech at the opening of the Imperial Parliament a few days ago urging the advisability of preparation to meet any emergency. In reply Hon. J. J. C. Abbott, the leader of the Government in the Senate, said the subject of the Pacific coast defences had received due consideration, and negotiations with the Imperial Government were progressing satisfactorily. The correspondence was in great part confidential, but such as was not would be laid before the Senate.

The campaign of the Ninth Battalion in the Northwest in 1885 was rehearsed in the Commons on Monday, when the commanding officer, Lieut.-Col. Amyot, made the longest speech of the session in arguing out a personal matter between himself and the Minister of Militia. The discussion was not a very profitable or—from a military standpoint—edifying one, but it had the satisfactory conclusion that Sir Adolphe Caron assured Col. Amyot that he had never intended to in any way reflect upon his honour as a soldier, and cited the correspondence which the Colonel had just read to the House, as proof that he had not failed during the campaign to express warm admiration for the Ninth. General Laurie then added a few words of praise, called forth by his experience on the staff of the brigade in which the regiment served. He declared that he could not desire a better regiment than the Ninth had proved themselves to be, nor a better soldier than Col. Amyot.

Sir Adolphe Caron has stated, in reply to a question put in the House of Commons, that the proposed School of Cavalry at Toronto is to be established this year, and that the higher commands will be awarded in the ordinary course of promotion of the officers now in the permanent cavalry corps. This announcement is satisfactory in view of the statement going the rounds not long ago that officers not now in the permanent service were to be favoured.

Lieut.-Col. the Hon. J. A. Ouimet, the Speaker of the House of Commons, has been re-elected chairman of the council of the Dominion Rifle Association. Lieut.-Col. John Macpherson, treasurer, and Lieut.-Col. Thos. Bacon, secretary, have also been re-elected. Another noteworthy stroke of business decided at the council meeting held last week, was that there should be a Wimbledon team as usual this year, and the choice of the commandant was left to the chairman of the council.

When the General Officer Commanding the Militia officially states, as he did at the annual meeting of the Dominion Rifle Association, that of Canada's thirty-seven thousand militiamen, thirty thousand could not hit a haystack, is it not fitting that steps should be at once taken to bring about a more creditable condition of affairs? Sir Fred Middleton did not tell anything new to military men, but we fancy when his statement appeared in the public prints it must have surprised the civilian portion of the population. Yet no better results can be expected from the present system, when the men get neither the necessary instruction how to go about shooting to hit, nor an ammunition allowance sufficient to give practical effect to such instruction were it given. A parliamentary committee to inquire into the merits and demerits of the system of training the militia would be timely.

A Sergeant Major, whose letter appears in this issue, writes feelingly upon the anomalous place these officers occupy. The Sergeant-Major's position is quite as important as any in the battalion, not even excepting that of the commanding officer himself, and while as chief non-commis-