

# THE CANADIAN MILITIA GAZETTE

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No. 17, of 16th November, 1888.

## Topics of the Week.

We would draw attention to the series of articles on the British Volunteers' "Schools of Instruction," now being republished from week to week in this paper as they appear in the *United Service Gazette*. They will be of particular interest to those acquainted with the working of our own schools, and especially to those who, like the MILITIA GAZETTE, believe that a remodelling of their plan would produce even better results than now obtainable from these already useful and ably conducted institutions. All such will watch the papers as they proceed for the appearance of any new ideas advantageously applicable to Canada.

Readers everywhere will welcome with pleasure announcements in the MILITIA GAZETTE of the operations of the live rifle association in the capital of the great North-West, where yet our militia has not secured a foothold. We have just received the programme, though not yet the scores, of the first annual competition of the Regina Rifle Association, held on Thanksgiving Day, the 15th. There are six matches—two at 200 and one each at 300, 400, 500 and 600 yards. Eight prizes are offered in each. The officers of the association are:—Patron, Lieut.-Governor Royal; president, D. Mowat; vice-president, W. C. Hamilton; council, R. J. Steel, J. W. Jowett, C. James, A. J. Fraser, R. J. Tinning; range officer, Capt. Norman; statistical officers, R. I. Jones and J. W. Jowett; range committee, D. Mowat and the secretary-treasurer, J. T. Stemshorn.

That enterprising corps the 57th Batt., Peterborough Rangers, an account of whose annual inspection appears in this issue, deserves more than passing mention. After having long held the reputation of being the crack rural battalion of No. 3 district, the 57th was a couple of years ago raised to the dignity of a city corps, and so well has it worn its new honours that it is now in a position to compete creditably with almost any in the service. It is to be regretted that at the inspection, as we are informed, the D.A.G. found it necessary to criticise unfavourably the condition of the arms, which, owing to the dampness of the armouries and the want of accommodation there, were not in as good shape as they might otherwise have been. Steps should be taken to have proper armouries provided, not only out of consideration of the comfort of the enthusiastic volunteers in the 57th, but for the proper preservation of their weapons. The necessary representations should be made to the Department without delay.

It takes considerable enterprise and ingenuity to design and carry into execution a scheme such as that which furnished the Queen's Own and Grenadiers of Toronto their Thanksgiving field day. A very interesting report appearing in this issue has been kindly forwarded by a Toronto correspondent. The corps concerned should feel proud of the satisfaction expressed by Col. Otter with the day's achievements.

Having observed the yarn quoted by this paper last week from the *United Service Gazette* concerning his alleged intention to retire because of disagreement with the Dominion authorities, Lieut.-Gen. Sir Fred. Middleton has promptly requested a denial of the story *in toto*. His relations with the Canadian authorities continue to be, as they have always been, of the most cordial character. That the Government appreciated his efforts on behalf of the force he has so creditably commanded was shown by the unusual course taken a few months ago in extending his term, which now extends, we believe, until 1892, and which we have no doubt Sir Fred. Middleton will complete with satisfaction to himself as to all others concerned.

It is expected that the commission on the defences of Canada, appointed by order-in-council last spring, will commence operations in a few days. The commission as originally named was: Lieut.-Gen. Middleton, Col. Powell, Adjt.-Gen., Major-Gen. Oliver and Lieut-Col. Irwin, Inspector of Dominion Artillery. General Oliver having gone to England, his place will be taken by the new commandant of the Royal Military College, Gen. Cameron. For the present the commission will content itself with the examination of different reports, plans, maps and dispatches pertaining to Canada's defences now in possession of the Department. Subsequently the Deputy Adjs.-gen. of the different districts may be called upon to supply what additional information is required.

A good story is going the rounds *apropos* of the oft raised question as to whether or not the private soldier should be obliged to salute an officer in plain clothes. It is an anecdote of Harry Oakes, a bluff, outspoken soldier who some twenty years ago commanded the Twelfth Lancers: A young officer complained to him that while in plain clothes a certain soldier had not saluted him. The soldier's excuse was that he had not recognized the officer. "I'll take care you can't make that excuse in future," quoth Col. Oakes. Then to the officer: "You will walk up and down the barrack square in plain clothes until this private is satisfied that he will know you again. The private gave the officer the benefit of about half an hour, and all he conceded then was his ability to recognize him in the suit he then wore. "If you are not satisfied," said the Colonel, "you will appear in the square for ten minutes in each civilian suit you own, and whenever you get a new suit you will do the same, and let the man know." The young officer never complained again of not getting what he considered his proper due in the matter of salutes.