

### A Misplaced School.

A Montreal correspondent writes a sensible and forcible letter, appearing in this issue, in favour of the maintenance of a military school at Montreal, in place of St. Johns, as at present. We would like to see the change made. The school has been long enough established at St. Johns now to show conclusively that it is anything but a success there. Whatever reasons the authorities may have had for trying the experiment of placing the school so far from those to be instructed, the more than counterbalancing disadvantages must have long since been apparent. The complaint that commissions remained vacant because men of standing could not be got to hie away off to the country to go to school, is of long standing, and we know that not only new appointments but promotions as well are checked from this cause.

In no city in Canada is there such a strength of volunteers as in Montreal. Were the members and ex-members of the force there to unite together as civilians, they would be able to exert upon their parliamentary representatives, and other leading men, and through them upon the Government, such force as would speedily lead to their reasonable request being granted. That is the way to attain the end sought. We believe that the government would readily establish the school at Montreal if suitable Government buildings existed there as at St. Johns, and that there is no special attachment to the latter place. This being the case, it will be seen that our Montreal friends have to fight only for dollars and cents, and not for a change in departmental policy.

### Infantry Fire Tactics.

[By Capt. C. B. Mayne, R.E.]

This is the second edition of perhaps the most valuable, as it is the most exhaustive, work upon Infantry Fire Tactics, in our own or perhaps any language. The author discusses fully and very clearly the possibilities and methods of small arms firing, including individual and collective firing, uncontrolled and controlled fire, inclined fire, indirect fire, and night firing; of the relative advantages of long range and short range; of the influence of ground and obstacles on the effect of infantry fire; fire discipline and the control and direction of fire; fire units and groups; and the text is illustrated by twenty-one tables and thirty-one figures.

The book contains the essence of above seventy of the best works on the subject, English and foreign, including our own musketry regulations, as well as those of the United States, Germany, France, Austria, Russia, Italy and Holland.

Captain Mayne does not confine himself to firing only, but deals fully with subjects which relate to it, even musketry instruction, range-finding, the use of the magazine rifle, the supply of ammunition on the battle-field, etc.

Interesting as he has succeeded in making a technical work, its interest and value are much enhanced by the following practical remarks, which will be fully appreciated by every earnest and thoughtful soldier:

"Superiority of fire is to be obtained more by a rational and good tactical use of the rifle than by any actual superiority of armament, though this latter consideration must be given its full weight. Other things being equal, the better the rifle, and its ammunition, the greater will be the effects of the fire.

"A study of the following pages will well illustrate the old adage that 'a more perfect tool requires a more skilful workman,' and we must never forget that under the rude test of war, if we wish to obtain even a small result in the field, it is necessary to demand much in peace.

"This object (the soldier's intelligent command of his weapon) can only be attained by constant training and practice in what should be done in the field, and this is all the more necessary because knowledge, and the application of that knowledge, are two totally different things. Knowledge is comparatively easy to attain; the application of it is hard. The former has first to be gained by study; the latter, which is the real key-note of success in war, can then only be learnt by constant practice. We have not nearly enough target practice in our army, by which alone accuracy of fire can be obtained."—*United Service Gazette*.

### How the British Soldier Is Taught to Shoot.

(By a Military Correspondent of the "Times.")

There is a general impression (1) that our soldiers shoot badly, (2) that their training is not practical, (3) that they do not get sufficient practice, (4) that in all these respects Continental troops are superior to British soldiers, and (5) that the Volunteers are superior in marksmanship to the Regular Army. I believe that four out of five of these impressions are incorrect. As regards the first and fourth, I can only express the convictions of those best qualified to form an opinion, and that opinion is that British soldiers shoot as well and have as thorough a training in musketry as the soldiers of the best foreign armies. As to the superiority of the Volunteers to Regulars, I am ready to admit that the Volunteers furnish a larger proportion of crack target shots than the Regular Army; and as to the Militia, their training is at present little better than a farce. But the performances at Wimbledon are at targets and under conditions which in no way resemble the objects fired at and the conditions of firing in real war. As to the averages of Volunteer regiments, even at target practice they are notoriously inferior to those of the Regular Army. The discussion of No. 3 I propose to defer for the moment, and shall now deal with the impression that the musketry instruction of the British Army is not sufficiently practical. If such were actually the case, great blame would attach to the military authorities, for the object of every operation of war, of all organizations, drill, strategy, and tactics, is but to place the Infantry in a position where with their fire they can inflict the greatest loss on the enemy. The end is an effective fire; the means are everything that enables that effective fire to be delivered. The first is only valuable as it leads up to the second. Moreover, it would be in the highest degree wasteful and foolish to spend millions of money on experiments, arms, and ammunition, and to fail to ensure that the best possible return was obtained from that expenditure. We have now succeeded in obtaining the most efficient rifle in the world, and not to turn that admirable weapon to the fullest account for want of a little thought, trouble and a few additional thousands of pounds would be an act of criminal folly. Is the impression as to the unpractical nature of our instruction, then, well founded? I have expressed my opinion above that it is not, and in support of my assertion I will give a brief account of a visit which I have just paid to what may be termed our musketry university at Hythe. This is not only an establishment whence practically issue all changes of system and all regulations; it is also the seat of central superintendence, of experiments, and the place where the instructors of musketry for the whole army are trained. I say "practically," because in theory the Adjutant-General of the army deals with all musketry matters. As a matter of fact, however, the head of the musketry department of the army is the Commandant of Hythe. It is open to question whether it would not be a better arrangement to appoint an officer at the Horse Guards, independent of every one save the Commander-in-Chief and the Adjutant-General, through whose hands all musketry business should pass, and who should be the recognized technical adviser of the latter official. At present the Commandant, while performing the duties I have named, is also occupied with the executive work at Hythe.

My visit to Hythe took place when the course was in full operation. There are four courses annually, each lasting about two months. Every branch of the service that uses rifles or carbines is represented there, including Marines, Royal Engineers, West Indian troops, and Indian Staff Corps. On the occasion of my visit there were even five sergeants of the Houssa Police Corps going through a course, and I was told that during the last few years a considerable number of the officers and non-commissioned officers of that corps had been instructed. The representatives whom I saw were smart, intelligent-looking men, very black, but not of a negro type of face. They all spoke English more or less, and the sergeant-major not only speaks English fluently and correctly, but can also write it. I may mention that this Sergeant Major was the other day presented at Hythe, with all due ceremony, with the medal for long service and good conduct. The usual number of officers and non-commissioned officers going through a course is 70 and 150 respectively; but with the addition to the instruction staff of one captain-instructor and eight sergeant-instructors, and a comparative small expenditure on buildings, the number could be increased to 100 officers and 200 non-commissioned officers. In the Regular Infantry and cavalry alone, not reckoning the demands of other branches of the Regular Army, of the Militia, the Yeomanry and the Volunteers, the regulations state that each adjutant, assistant adjutant, officer commanding a troop or company, regimental sergeant-major, sergeant company instructor, must be in possession of a Hythe certificate, and that the troop sergeant-major, company colour-sergeant, and at least one other non-commissioned officer should possess one. Clearly, therefore, the teaching capacity of our musketry university is not as great as it should be. Another improvement needed is that the ground