

make and quality. This is very improper, and now that dress uniforms have been supplied to officers, no excuse can exist for non-compliance with them.

Lieut.-Colonel Fletcher, C.M.G., refers at considerable length to Military District No. 5, and especially to the excellent spirit discernible throughout the district in favor of the active militia, and the truly loyal and willing disposition that prevails throughout the force. In allusion to the garrison brigade of artillery he remarks there are vacancies for two field officers. I am of opinion that majors in artillery brigades are superfluous, as captains of series would work their guns, and one field officer to command a brigade is sufficient. He gives a notice to the Queen's Birthday review in presence of His Excellency the Governor General, Her Royal Highness the Princess Louise, and to the presence of the American battalion from Brooklyn. It is a coincidence that the double echelon of quarter columns, designed to show a formation to resist the impetuous attack by a barbarian multitude unsupported by cannon was adopted with complete success a few months later, only upon a larger scale on spandons and, by Lieut.-General Lord Chelmsford at the battle of Ind.

A commander cannot be restricted by fixed rules in the presence of an enemy, general principles must guide him to dispose forces to the best advantage, according to the nature of the ground and the character and power of the enemy in his front. Lieut.-Colonel Harwood, Military District No. 6, gives a very account of the generally satisfactory state of the corps under his command. The 8th Hyacintho Battalion is now full by the issue of a new company, and having the Arthabaskaville Independent Company attached to it. This corps is now the 8th Infantry Battalion.

Lieut.-Colonel Duchesnay, Military District No. 7, drilled 2,000 men during the training, and reports well of them. He refers to the Quebec labor riot in August last, and affords generous testimony to the conduct of the troops called out and several days kept their arms, by which a serious riot was averted. The magistrates of the city and Justice of the Peace presented them with an address, acknowledging the valuable aid they had afforded the civil power. Lieut.-Colonel Mansell, Military District No. 8, has as usual invited a report distinguished by many thoughtful and practical suggestions. It embraces a variety of questions of military importance to the Dominion, and I can only invite a careful perusal of its matter, which it would be unfair to refer to by a mere allusion. The reception of His Excellency the Governor General H. R. H. the Princess in the Province of New Brunswick, and prominent share taken in the ceremonies by the militia are noted. The measures adopted by Lieut.-Colonel Mansell on that occasion, and the quiet and orderly behavior of the troops were much appreciated, as afterwards duly recorded in General Orders.

Lieut.-Colonel Laurie, Military District No. 9, reports the training of 100 men at annual drill. He very properly calls attention to the necessity for a separate district armorer. By the present slow pace it will be nearly five years before the arms have been gone through, and this requires prompt attention and remedy. He refers also to the necessity for infantry schools for instruction of privates and sergeants—a want so generally felt and so frequently stated in previous reports.

Lieut.-Colonel Huxley, of Hullifax, has this year been honored by the title of "Princess Louise," having had the distinguished good fortune to furnish the guard of honor on the landing of His Excellency and Her Royal Highness in the Royal Naval Dockyard at Halifax, on their first stepping on shore in British North America.

Lieut.-Colonel Osborne Smith, C.M.G., Military District No. 10, points out the necessity of increased forces, in consideration of the influx of foreign labor, in view of the large works now in progress. This is a very reasonable suggestion, as experience has shown that this may, at any time, be a very disturbing element. His progress in organizing mounted and infantry companies in the North-West Territories has been already fully dwelt upon in the report. He states that the action of the Government in extending the militia law to the territories and Keewatin has been thoroughly appreciated and valued by the settlers as far as their yet comparatively small numbers would admit. He looks upon the North-West as spreading with the newly formed settlements as calculated to be an important agent in civilizing that vast territory, and as being a powerful link in the chain of Dominion defences between the two great oceans.

Lieut.-Colonel John Hamilton Gray, C.M.G., Military District No. 12, of Edward Island, gives a fair account of the militia. He refers to the approval of the Governor-General of their conduct and assistance during the visit of His Excellency and Her Royal Highness last summer. He also refers to the totally defenceless state of Charlottetown, with 10,000 inhabitants entirely at the mercy of an armed privateer which could in a very few hours levy contributions and exact plunder to a ruinous extent. He suggests the necessity for some action being taken to allay the groundless apprehensions of the inhabitants.

He concludes the district staff reports, with the exception of the report from British Columbia, not yet come to hand, owing to the distance of Vancouver Island, but that forms the subject of special remarks further on in this report.

He reports from the commandants of the Royal Military College and the gunnery schools of A. and B. Batteries, have not yet received me, but they will be in the appendix, and are sure to do attentive perusal.

Artillery is referred to in detail from the various districts. The arm continues to derive great advantage from the gunnery schools. Some of the garrison batteries in the west, formerly designated as light batteries, having no guns. Three new batteries have been authorized to be raised in the City of Quebec and Lévis, where they are so much needed to man the works of the forts and forts. They have the means of instruction at hand.

Field batteries are in good working order. Fifteen are equipped with iron rifled nine pounder guns, one with 24 pounder guns, and the remainder with bronze smooth bore. They are efficient and generally commanded by able officers. The artillery maintains its usual serviceable reputation. The general's body guard at the Toronto review, under the command of Lieut. Colonel G. T. Denton, and the Squadron, under Lieut.-Colonel Boulton, who as senior

officer commanded the brigade; and the Squadron 2nd Regiment under Major Elliott, showed to great advantage, while the Montreal Troop under Major Toes, and the Ottawa Troop under Captain Stewart, elicited approbation at the Montreal review. The Ottawa Troop has had the honour of being styled "The Princess Louise" Dragoon Guards, and the efficient squadron at Quebec, under Lieut.-Colonel Forsyth, has been granted the distinctive title of "The Queen's Own Canadian Hussars." The saddlery, arms and equipments of the cavalry in general in each military district are reported complete and in good serviceable condition.

When the brigade schools of instruction are instituted at Quebec and Kingston, the cavalry of the Dominion will have the advantage of trained drill instructors, besides acquiring a knowledge of equitation and horse management, which are necessary for steadiness, and to prevent confusion in the ranks in rapid evolutions.

*To be continued.*

## Fatal Explosion of a Shell.

A COLONEL AND SERGEANT KILLED.

During the practice of the 1st Lanark Artillery at Irvine, Scotland, the detachment told off to man the gun had placed it in position, and subsequently doubled to the rear, in readiness for the words "prepare for action," the sergeant-instructor meanwhile preparing the shell. A number of shells were laid out for use, and Sergeant Kirker, kneeling on his right knee, began to fix the fuse, making use of the mallet. The other officers not in the detachment were standing promiscuously about, when suddenly what is described as a loud rumbling sound was heard, which completely stunned the whole party. When the smoke had sufficiently cleared away to make surrounding objects discernable, the most conspicuous figure observed was that of Major Mathieson, who, unlike the others who were struck, was not knocked down, but had apparently received severe injuries as his motions indicated excruciating pain about the abdomen. He was about to fall, when Mr. A. Parker contractor to the Association, caught him in his arms and carried him into the store-room. Col. Kidston ran to the assistance of Colonel Watson, who was lying on the ground stunned; and an eye-witness states that he saw Sergeant Kirker's foot blown into the air in the direction of the Armstrong gun.

On a search having been made the foot was found at the place indicated. His boot was blown in another direction, and struck an onlooker standing without the battery. His stockings and part of his trousers were also stripped from his leg. Shortly before the sergeant's death, he, feeling his end approaching, expressed a desire to make a communication to the officers. A messenger was despatched to the hotel, and on their arrival Kirker made a declaration to the effect that he alone was responsible for the bursting of the shell, that no one was to blame but himself and stated how the accident occurred.

From the first Colonel Watson showed that he was fully aware of the serious nature of his injuries. When Colonel Kidston ran to his assistance, he declared he was done for, and some time afterward exclaimed—"I die for the good old First Lanark; but I wish it had been in action." The Colonel, although stretched in a helpless condition, seemed to think of everybody but himself. He was continually crying to the medical men, "Look after so and so," and was among the last to be carried off the field. Sergeant Kirker also displayed great heroism. The doctor bandaged his leg with a lanyard, and then Kirker desired him to attend to the others saying, "I will do now; attend to some of these poor gentlemen." Kirker was an old soldier, in receipt of a pension earned after twenty years service in the Crimean and Indian Mutiny campaigns. He leaves a widow and three of a family, the eldest, about eighteen years, having lately joined the army. When Kirker's watch was taken from his pocket a piece of the shell was indented on the back of it, and it was stopped at 3.40 p. m. This circumstance is believed to have saved him from instantaneous death by preventing the piece of shell from piercing his heart. Before his death Kirker stated to his nurse and a witness the curious circumstance that on the previous night he dreamed that a serious accident would happen at the battery. On his niece asking him why he went after such a dream, he replied, "Duty; duty."