

THE CANADIAN MILITIA GAZETTE

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NOTE AND COMMENT.

The second session of the seventh parliament of the Dominion of Canada opened last Thursday. There is no reason to suppose that the Government will introduce any measures of momentous interest to the militia force of the Dominion, as the present Minister of Militia has too recently assumed control to be likely to take the responsibility for any new departures without more leisure than he will have during the session to carefully weigh the consequences of them, from a political as well as from a military standpoint.

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This being the case, it is all the more necessary that the military members of the House, irrespective of party, should urge seriously upon the attention of the Government the necessity of adopting such reforms as are admitted on all sides and by all shades of political opinion to be necessary for the well-being of the force.

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And the first and foremost of the absolute necessities is annual drill for the whole force. The need of this is conceded, and the only argument ever used against it is that of expense. The increase in expense might be materially lessened by decreasing the number of corps to assemble in brigade camps, which could be easily accomplished, as many corps hitherto assembled in camp could perform their drills more effectually and satisfactorily at regimental headquarters.

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Another matter which might fairly be urged upon the attention of the House is a more liberal allowance of ammunition for target practice. The militia expenditure for the year ending 30th June 1890 was \$1,287,000. The cost of the ammunition granted to the whole force—permanent as well as volunteer—amounted to the insignificant total of \$9,200. This amount ought to be doubled, and might

be trebled with highly beneficial effects to both the force and the country, if distributed under proper supervision.

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To ensure a proper supervision of the use of the ammunition distributed to the force by the Government, we have already advised that an officer be appointed to act as inspector of musketry, and we now again draw attention to the desirability of making such an appointment, in the interest of the force at large.

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Evidence of the necessity of leaving home to hear news of oneself is afforded by the following from the Volunteer Record:—

“The military funeral of a Captain in the Canadian militia at Montreal last month, was the outcome of a new command being instituted in the field battery tactics, doubtless a necessary one in that part of the empire, but at the same time ludicrous. When the gun detachment were coming home, Sergt.-Major P—, in command, gave the order:—‘Detachment, halt! No. 6, dismount; take a handful of snow and hand it to No. 1, his ears are frozen.’ P— was No. 1, his ears soon got thawed out, and now the boys are having a good laugh over the innovation.”

We hardly thought it would have been possible to freeze any man's ears in Montreal on any day during this very mild winter, and our contemporary has certainly been imposed upon with respect to the fatality alleged to have been the outcome of the official treatment of the frostbite.

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At the annual meeting of the Ontario Artillery Association, held recently in Toronto, the statement was made that canvas tunics had been promised to the artillery officers by the Minister of Militia in 1888, but that as yet they were not forthcoming. We feel sure there must have been some misunderstanding on the part of the artillery officers with regard to

this, as it has always been a maxim with the late Minister of Militia, and a trait of character upon which he greatly prided himself, that a promise once made was never broken or forgotten. Of course, people will occasionally think they have a promise when really none has been made or intended.

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The Army and Navy Gazette has the following:—

“The death of ‘Lieutenant’ Maurice Shea in Canada, at the age of 96, is stated to have removed the last of the Waterloo survivors. Shea may have been present in the battle, but a diligent search through old Army Lists and Gazettes fails to reveal the fact that anyone of that name was subsequently promoted from the ranks to a commission, and we can but state that so far as the British Army is concerned no such officer as Lieutenant Maurice Shea was ever possessed of a commission, but doubts as to the authenticity of this claim to Waterloo honours are also strengthened by the statement that the deceased had served in the Royal Irish during the campaign of 1815. Need we point out that the 4th Royal Irish Dragoon Guards, the 8th Royal Irish Hussars, the Royal Irish Regiment, and the Royal Irish Fusiliers, none of them took part in the Battle of Waterloo?”

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The Lee-Metford magazine rifles now in the possession of the British regular troops are to be exchanged for others of the same pattern, but sighted for use with Cordite ammunition. The issue of the rifles will be made as soon as sufficient numbers are ready.

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Lieut. Col. O'Brien recently lectured before the Canadian Military Institute, Toronto, taking as the subject of his address the “Growth of a military spirit in Canada”; and in the course of his remarks showed that both of the races who compose our Dominion possess a birthright of military spirit derived from