

NOTE, ED.—Major Palliser proposes rifled mortars, fired at a fixed elevation (45°) with varying charges, similar to the present system of smooth bore.

Rifled mortars were first introduced to notice in the late Franco-Prussian war, and are weapons which are likely to play an important part in any future campaign, both for firing heavy common shell with large bursting charges, (probably gun cotton), and also vertical Shrapnel shells. The weapons with which the latter would be used should more properly be called "rifled howitzers." As it is, however, evident that a large amount of the explosive force is expended in overcoming the friction of the studs against the sides of the grooves, and in imparting to the projectile the necessary rotatory motion, the amount of which increases with increased velocities of the projectile and sharpness of twist in the grooves of the gun, it becomes apparent that to impart to shells fired from a rifled mortar at a fixed elevation with varying charges to suit different ranges, and consequently with different initial velocities, the proper amount of velocity of rotation necessary to keep the longer axis of the shot parallel with its trajectory, that the twist of the rifling should also vary proportionally to the charges used, or else there will be a range at which the projectile having expended its motion of rotation, at the highest point of its line of flight, will, in descending, turn over on its shorter axis, thereby rendering the firing inaccurate, and the percussion fuzes uncertain of effect.

The better means in our opinion is to fire fixed charges with elevations varying according to the ranges required.

Military Items.

—So little is known of the real state or strength of the Chinese army, that great interest is attached to a lecture of Captain Gill, R.E., on the subject before the United Service Institution recently.

The organization of the Chinese forces is most peculiar. The "Banner Army," which most nearly approaches to European notions of what an army should be, consists of about 275,000 officers and men, no more than 50,000 of whom could be said to be effective.

Then there is the force of the "Green Standard," which has the responsibilities of the police force generally, and, in addition, mans the navy of the seaboard provinces. The men are strictly kept to their own provinces, and the force in each province amounts to about 34,500 men. Of Chinese soldiers generally, Captain Gill observes that if properly trained, properly led by officers in whom they have confidence, they would certainly furnish material for admirable soldiers—which, at present, they certainly are not, being, according to all accounts, a compound of cowardice and ferocity.

—A despatch from Wellington, New Zealand, states that the Regent General, the Marquis of Normanby, who is the Governor appointed by the Crown, has decided upon ordering from England a number of torpedo boats for the torpedo corps which is to be organized for the protection of the colony. This is understood to be simply a precautionary measure, as no danger from attack by sea threatens the colony. But within the past ten or twelve years, New Zealand has prospered and become much more desirable than formerly as a possession for any power, and it was concluded by the Governor, with the consent of the General Assembly of the colony, that further harbor defence was needed in case of the breaking out of war between England and other maritime powers. The argument was that New Zealand was situated too far from Great Britain to expect aid from her at short notice, and that the colony is an additional disadvantage in case of an attack, by being divided into three islands, from fifteen to eighteen miles apart. It has Auckland and other excellent ports, the most of which are now not protected in any way against the approach of armed vessels.

—A comprehensive bill for regulating the militia force of the United States was reported by the Militia Committee of the House on April the 7th. The following are briefly its principal features:—Every able-bodied male citizen between the ages of eighteen and forty-five years is to be enrolled as available for militia duty. All of these, regularly organized under State laws in military corps, are to belong to the "National Guard," and all others enrolled are to belong to the "inactive militia. Provided that there are 700 members to the organizations of each State and Territory; that in the organizations there are not more than 700 men to each representative or delegate in Congress, that each organization or corps serves five days in camp each year and drills once a month; and that at least one rifle range for the practice of the militia is established in each State and Territory, the Secretary of War will, through the Chief of Ordnance, furnish to the militia services uniforms for each man enlisted for three years, camp equipments, small arms, and sufficient ammunition for range practice. The President is authorized to offer annually a prize of \$100 for marksmanship in each State, and \$1,000 for a team prize, each team of fifteen to be selected from the regularly enlisted militia of a State or Territory. The President is empowered, in case of war, to call out the national guard or any part thereof, for a time not exceeding twelve months. A board of officers appointed by the President is to make regulations and decide upon the service uniform to be issued by the Government. Finally, \$500,000 are appropriated to carry out the provisions of the bill, and all conflicting legislation is repealed.

LT.—GENERAL SIR E. SELBY SMYTH, K. C. M. G.

The parting with a friend is at all times a melancholy event, but the return of Lt.-General Sir E. Selby Smyth to England, after commanding our Colonial forces for so many years, calls for marked and special regrets. In him the Militia of Canada loses a true friend, one who has at all times had its welfare at heart, and advocated its interest in spite of all opposition. The great experience he must have acquired in the conduct of Colonial military affairs, and the valuable assistance he can consequently give on so important a subject, is directly lost to the Government of this country and ourselves. Under his command many alterations and great improvements have been instituted, raising the tone of our service to a high state of efficiency. It is, however, to be sincerely hoped that in General Smyth's new sphere of action he will not forget us, but, by being more directly in communication with the War Office at home, will be better able to advance our future prospects, by placing before the authorities in a clearer light the urgent necessity of an "Imperial Colonial Reserve." It is but expressing the earnest sentiments of every officer and man in the Militia when we say, that we all wish him "God speed," and may success attend his future commands, in whatever quarter of the globe the "arms" of Her Majesty may call him.

At the dinner given in Quebec to the officers of visiting corps, on the occasion of the celebration of the past Queen's Birthday, the Lieutenant-General commanding, who was received with loud cheers, in reply to his health, proposed by the Chairman, Lieut.-Colonel Duchesnay, D.A.G., responded as follows:—

"I am sure that none of my friends who are present will think I am using merely a formal phrase when I say that often as it has been my duty and my pleasure in every quarter of the globe to address kind and indulgent