

flank (Q.O.R.) made any demonstration against the right of the enemy (13th), but not then aggressively.

A part of the right flank became engaged about the same time with some companies of the 48th Batt. and a desultory action was maintained for an hour between those bodies along the heights overlooking the belt line to the Park Drive Reservation.

The guns of the advanced guard, in the meantime, had, after much delay, been sent by a long detour to play upon the flanks of the enemy, but only succeeded in firing two rounds per gun at 2.10 p.m. just previous to the "cease fire" being sounded.

The guns of the rear guard retired from their first position at 1.30 p.m. to the second position, but still no forward movement of any strength was made by the advanced guard. At 1.55 p.m. the rear guard guns opened fire from their second position to cover some retreating companies of the 48th Highlanders, who now appeared on the opposite side of the valley. At 2.10 p.m. these guns turned their attention to the Q.O.R., who were, at this time, advancing in fair strength against the position, but without the support of their own guns, or strong enough to carry the position. At 2.15 p.m. the "cease fire" sounded, leaving one-half of the rear guard infantry with cavalry and guns still covering and protecting the embarkation of its main body.

Remarks.—The disposition of the rear guard was most faulty, covering as it did a frontage of nearly two miles, with practically no supports or reserves. The two battalions were sent off in diametrically opposite directions until they were three-quarters of a mile apart, whereas the force should have been concentrated and well in hand so as to be able to utilise it at any moment in any direction. Its orders were to delay, and there was every facility for carrying such out. Owing to the dispositions made, the services of nearly one-half the force (48th Highlanders) were lost from the very beginning, leaving the burthen of the defence upon the cavalry, artillery and 13th Battalion. Owing to the tardiness of the movements of the opposing force, these corps were enabled to hold the final position occupied by them until 2.15 p.m., and thus ensure the embarkation of the main body.

The advanced guard did not push forward, as its special idea ordered. Its artillery should have been brought into action upon the high land overlooking the C.P.R., when the enemy's artillery opened fire upon the vanguard. Afterwards circumstances must have guided its use. As it was, delay took place in moving it definitely, and finally it was sent to a position that had been prematurely fixed by order, and consequently only got into action when too late to be of material advantage. The delay in bringing the artillery into action was repeated by not re-enforcing and pushing forward the left flank, which was free from the annoyance of artillery fire, while little notice need have been taken of the left flank of the enemy (48th), as it was isolated and incapable of much harm, besides the reinforcements that were coming up from the main body would soon have disposed of this trouble.

The objective of the O.C. the northern force was good and his plans well laid. By his determined and concentrated advance he cut through the enemy's line, but then delayed too long in making the changes necessary to the existing circumstances, and then allowed the enemy, shorn of half its original strength, to hold its ground sufficiently long to enable its main body to embark. While the tactics of the rear guard were necessarily to delay, those of the advanced guard should have been most aggressive and rapid. On neither side was proper information obtained by the cavalry as to positions of opposing forces. The dispositions of both forces were made in anticipation of circumstances which never occurred. The orders issued to the advanced guards were too profuse and complicated, and of such a character as to allow for no contingency. For instance, the case of the cavalry, in which it was

bound down to pace and location, in place of giving it a free hand to obtain information in a named direction and in a manner best suited to circumstances, the loss of half of the cavalry at the outset was the result. Again it was a mistake to detail under any circumstances all the available cavalry as escort to the guns. The mounted officers generally did not dismount when under fire, and men and units put out of action did not generally carry out orders as to piling arms or marching to the rear with arms reversed, as directed in I.D., part X.

The foregoing remarks are not made in the spirit of censure, but with the idea of correcting mistakes which in actual service would prove disastrous, and are intended to encourage that earnest desire, which has hitherto existed, for practical knowledge and efficiency in the calling which is so freely and voluntarily undertaken for the defence of the country and the Empire by the militia of Canada. The greatest possible credit is due officers and men of the active militia, who under most trying circumstances cheerfully devoted the day to the downright hard work which such manoeuvres necessarily entail, while a special notice is due to the troop of the G.G.B.C., who not only paraded voluntarily, but furnished horses and subsistence at their own expense, the 9th Toronto Field Battery, whose attendance was also voluntary, and the 13th Batt., upon whom fell the extra fatigue of the journey from and to Hamilton.

W. D. OTTER, Lieut.-Col.,  
Umpire-in-Chief.

### QUALIFICATION FOR SURGEONS.

EDITOR MILITARY GAZETTE:

SIR,—I have read with much interest the articles published in your valuable paper on the medical service and its wants. Allow me to draw the attention of your readers to a matter about which I have endeavored to awaken public and professional interest for some years past. I refer to the necessity of medical officers qualifying themselves for their duties, just as combatant officers do. All that is now required by the regulations to be appointed a medical officer is to be on the medical register. Nothing is asked as to the knowledge of the special duties of the rank and office of the candidate. Yet military medicine, surgery, hygiene, administration of hospital and ambulance drill, are really specialties. Is it not time that medical officers should be asked by the Department to qualify themselves for their duties before promotion, just as junior combatant officers are required to do? No medical officer in England of militia, volunteers or yeomanry is commissioned until he does so; he is given an acting appointment. Would not the medical service be held in greater esteem by all ranks if it were felt that they had specially qualified themselves? Would it not also be professionally advantageous to the officers themselves? There would be no difficulty in arranging with the various medical colleges in the Dominion to give a short special course of instruction, to be followed at some time by an examination by a board of medical officers appointed by the Department.

I am arranging for a voluntary course of instruction to be given at Trinity Medical College, in this city, next spring.

Yours, etc.,

G. STERLING RYERSON,  
Surg.-Lieut.-Col. and D.S.G.

Toronto, Oct., 1896.

J. J. Taylor, of The Witness city staff, is starting a military column in that paper. He is a member of the Victoria Rifles and was at one time in the 43rd. He is a brother of J. D. Taylor, now of The Daily Colonist, Victoria, B.C., and formerly editor of THE MILITARY GAZETTE.

A correspondent of The Halifax Mail, writing about militia matters, among other things has this to say about the inspection of the 63rd Batt. in that city: "The recent inspection by Lieut.-Col. Maunsell, Dominion infantry inspector, shows the policy of the present general. Col. Maunsell did not value time or trouble. He examined every officer in his duties very thoroughly. He did not stop at battalion drill, but went on to company and section drill and examined the N.C.O.'s in their duties as well."