

GOSSIP OF THE MILITIA.

The Royal Grenadiers Establish an Annual Military Tournament.

Inspection of Toronto Garrison Artillery, and regret at its impending disbandment—The Militia Reports on clothing—Shall medical supplies be forthcoming?—Changes and promotions among non.-coms. at Ottawa—The Scottish company of the 63rd: the annual re-union—Capt. Twining bids farewell to Halifax—Sir Adolphe Caron and General Middleton at the Mounted Infantry School.

“WITHOUT exception the best drilled corps in British Columbia,” is the complimentary way in which the Westminster Rifles are spoken of by the *Columbian*, in noticing a drill parade, under Lieut. Doane, which was held on the 30th ult.

Capt. John Davidson and Mr. John Taylor, of Guelph, have just patented a passenger coach safety lamp, their improvement being that should the lamp be overturned, so soon as it had passed an angle of forty-five degrees an extinguishing fluid deluges the burner and wick, putting out the light. The device is said to be simple, and one to be easily brought into general use.

John Bradley, who was a member of the Welland Canal Field Battery at the fight at Fort Erie with the Fenians, on June 2nd, 1866, and lost a leg in that engagement, died at Port Colborne on Friday, 9th December, 1887. Bradley received from the Dominion Government the magnificent sum of 30c per day pension. Mr. C. W. Bunting, when member for Welland, had him appointed ferryman at Port Colborne. He leaves a widow and five children.

The members of “A” Co., Royal School of Infantry, Fredericton, N.B., have subscribed for a memorial tablet to be placed over the grave of Pte. A. Parsons, the first of their comrades of the school to pass over to the silent majority. The tablet, a handsome piece of workmanship in Rutland white marble, has just been completed. The design is a raised shield with the following inscription: “In memory of Private J. Parsons, died 23rd May, 1885, aged 20 years. This tablet was erected by his comrades of ‘A’ Company, Royal School of Infantry.” Above the shield are two crossed rifles with fixed bayonets. Resting on the shield is a regulation helmet. On the upper part of the tablet, between the bayonets, is the badge of the school corps, consisting of the belt, with the words “Royal School of Infantry,” surmounted by a crown in the center of which is the emblem of the corps, a beaver. The whole is surrounded by a border of elaborately carved leaves.

Toronto.

THE Royal Grenadiers are, I am glad to see, going to have their first annual tournament on Friday, the 16th December, at the Metropolitan Rink. Although the programme omits to say whether the events are open to the militia world generally, I trust that they are and that the entries will be numerous. They may be sent to Sergt. Metcalf, Toronto P.O., up to the evening of the 14th. The events are: quarter mile race; tugs-of-war of 10 men each; sack race; half mile, drill order, race; relief race; fat man’s race, 200 lbs. and upward (this is limited to members of the Grenadiers); n. c. o. race, distance not given. Tug-of-war open to any organization (four men a side).

Capt. Hendrie, of the Hamilton Field Battery, has invited a number of the officers of the Toronto corps to spend a day at his farm, near Waterdown, to see the 40 head of thoroughbreds there.

I take the following clipping from the *World*:—“An interesting historical stone memorial has been rescued from oblivion and placed inside the Church of St. Mark’s, Niagara. It is the only memorial extant of 300 men of British troops and Canadian militia who fell in defence of Niagara when the American army, under Gen. Dearborn, of 7,000 men landed there on May 27, 1813. It reads as follows:—Sacred to the memory of Capt. M. McClelland, aged 42 years, and Charles Wright and William Cameron, in the 25th year of their age, of the 1st Regiment of Lincoln militia, who gloriously fell on May 27, 1813; also Adjutant Loyde, of the 8th or King’s Regiment of Infantry.

“As livid lightnings dart their vivid light
“So poured they forth their fires in bloody fight,
“They bravely fell to save their country’s cause,
“They loved their constitution, King and laws.”

“Pultan” gave us some capital caricatures of officers and sergeants. I think he might have commenced his remarks higher up the scale and worked downwards. What would he say did he see D.A.G.’s without spurs; wearing overshoes in uniform, etc., etc. What would he say did he see a D.A.G. at inspection, his breast one blaze of medals; they were honestly won—at rifle practice. The regulations lay down the law and say that these medals may be worn “in uniform at rifle matches” or “at rifle association meetings.”

ON “HANDLING A BATTERY.”

My friend who wrote me about the regulations governing the last gun practice of field batteries, now writes me again and says: “Printers’ error be D—(and write it with a capital D).” As far as regards his battery, he says, he was ordered by a brigade order to transport his men to Port Colborne; that he had to put his hand into his pocket to pay their fares there and back, and also pay for their maintenance there. That neither their rations nor an equivalent was issued to them; that he has written for pay to recoup himself, but that so far (it is nearly six months now) he has not been repaid, in fact the matter is “under consideration.” If you undertake, my friend, to keep up a battery you must expect these little things to happen. However, you have had a lesson, and next time you will probably know what to do. This is one of those cases where you are expected to be able to handle a battery under any circumstances whatever. You have handled it.

The Militia Regulations, 1883, contain the same plan for artillery camps as that inserted in R. & O., 1887. The department also issues officially a drill book for field artillery, containing a plan of encampment, but different from that in the regulations.

An artillery officer might lay out his camp in accordance with the artillery drill book and be found fault with by the D. A. G. of his district for not complying with the plan in the regulations.

Officers, in accordance with paragraph 709, of R. & O., 1883, will bear in mind that the carriages and trucks specified in the field exercises are those in ordinary use on railways in England, and as the passenger and box cars used in Canada are not similar, due allowance must be made. Would not this paragraph have read much better if the seating and carrying capacities of the Canadian cars had been inserted?

I said “specified in the field exercises.” Would you kindly oblige me by telling me the number of the page in the exercises where I will find this information.

THE CLOTHING OF THE MILITIA.

I have had occasion to refer to the clothing issued to the militia. Dissatisfaction has existed in the force for some time back regarding this. I understand that the clothing is furnished by Canadian contractors, the cloth made in Canada, in fact everything down to the sewing on of the buttons being done in this country. It is delivered at Ottawa, where an inspector sits upon it and condemns or passes it. If he passes the articles we ought to be satisfied, but it seems to be just the contrary. This is what is said officially about the clothing in reports: “Complaints of clothing generally—especially trousers, they did not last out the 12 days, made from such bad material.” “Complaints have been made against the rifle tunics; bad cloth and worse sewing.” “The trousers issued to this corps was not of good cloth and soon gave way.” That’s what we find after the clothing has been passed by the inspector and issued to corps. Now this is what the director of stores says of the same clothing: “The clothing supplied is equal, if not superior, in quality of material and make to what had formerly been purchased in England. The reports of the inspector fully warrant the statement that this clothing is certainly a credit to Canadian manufacturers.” “The clothing after due inspection, proved satisfactory and in accordance with contract.” Am I to understand that the contract calls for bad sewing, bad cloth, etc.? I notice in the permanent corps a large number of the men have sewn hooks and eyes on the skirts of their tunics to prevent their bulging out in front. So much for fit.

The amount voted annually for clothing is about \$90,000. Advertising for tenders costs about \$3,400, and my friend the inspector, who receives \$10 per diem for passing clothing, trousers included, which will “not last out 12 days,” is made to pronounce the supplies a “credit to Canadian manufacturers.” What an insult to Canadian manufacturers!

Clothing rotten, S. Ammunition unreliable, guns obsolete, carriages as a rule decayed, rifles inaccurate, tents bad, medical appliances wanting, regulations a dead letter, such is my summary of the militia reports. It seems we pay a Major-General, an Inspector of Artillery, with two assistants, a large number of D.A.G.’s and Brigade Majors, to inspect the militia, their equipment, etc., generally. I was very nearly forgetting the Inspector of Engineers, but as there are really no government engineer stores in charge of these corps much cannot be said as regard them. Notwithstanding this staff and their recommendations, the same thing goes on year after year.

MEDICAL STORES LACKING.

Clothing I have settled. The next subject is medical appliances. One surgeon calls attention (and it is not the first time either) “to the insufficiency of the medical stores”; another draws “particular attention to the very inadequate supply of medicines and appliances; the astringents and opiates were exhausted before the end of the first week; there were no bandages or cotton to make any from; there were no splints, not even a catheter; the adhesive plaster was worthless; no surgical instruments of any kind were supplied, not even a pair of common scissors.” Another says: “The medicine chest supplied by the department was simply a box. * * * It did not contain any of the appliances requisite for medical or surgical purposes.”

The above quotations have been taken from reports since the rebellion of ‘85. I should have thought that things would have improved since then. At the time of the outbreak—*while actually in the field*—“I made enquiries regarding the equipment of the various regimental surgeons and was surprised to learn that, without an exception, they were all very scantily provided with medicines, instruments and dressings.”

In fact I feel that in the event of an epidemic or an engagement it would be impossible to render that service which would be required.” And this extract is further backed up with: “Five or six regiments and two batteries were already on the march and were provided with, some of them at least, but very meagre or ill-regulated medical supplies.” Some evidently then had no medical supplies. Now that we have a Surgeon-General, who I might hint should be the sole responsible administrative head of the medical branch, it is in reason to expect that surgeons should be supplied with at least “a pair of common scissors.” Well, “Blessed are they that expect little, for they shall never be disappointed.”

Here is an incident during the rebellion: “The wounded men, taken where they fell, had only the clothes they were wearing at the time, and these were usually blood stained or cut up. I therefore ordered a complete supply of clothing from Winnipeg but only received some uniforms.” I presume hospital clothing was ordered.

If I am not wrong, even now hospital clothing is a great scarcity in permanent corps.

LINCH-PIN.

INSPECTION OF THE GARRISON ARTILLERY.

The Toronto Garrison Artillery mustered on the evening of the 5th, forty strong, under Capt. McMurrich, and were inspected at the Drill Shed by Lieut.-Col. Otter, D.A.G., and Brigade-Major Gray. The corps was put through several company movements under Capt. McMurrich, all of which were very creditably done. After the muster roll was called they were put through the thirty-two and forty pound gun drill under Sergt.-Major Spence and Instructor Sergeant Ward. This part of the work was done in very good style. The D. A. G. expressed himself as well pleased with their movements and gun drill, and particularly with their neat and soldierly appearance. There were quite a few military and civilian spectators and the universal opinion was that it would be a great pity to see such a fine corps broken up for want of support from the Government. After the men were dismissed Capt. McMurrich entertained the inspecting officers and the other officers present at supper at the Toronto Club.—*World*.

London.

AS there is not much going on in military matters just now, I will resume where I left off the subject dealt with last week. For the purpose of testing the efficiency of the militia (see annual reports) let us visit the annual brigade camp of M. D. No. — and we shall see what we shall see.

We are approaching the lines occupied by that much lauded old corps, the —th “Hardhitters,” and here is a company turning out in marching order. We notice that a few of the old hands are dressed and waiting to fall in, while the remainder of the company are variously engaged. Some are daubing pipe-clay on their already wet belts; some are vainly trying to strap their greatcoats to the old-fashioned packing