

# THE CANADIAN MILITIA GAZETTE

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## Topics of the Week.

It is proposed to establish shortly a Royal Military College Gazette, to be edited by a committee. Such a publication would no doubt serve a useful purpose in helping to educate the public up to a proper appreciation of the usefulness of the College, and the scheme deserves the support of every well-wisher of this model military institution.

"Doubting Thomas," who writes concerning the New Year's scores reported from Fenelon Falls, cannot surely be acquainted with the Fighting Major who commands the Victoria *Warder*, whence the scores were obtained. We leave our correspondent and his request for information to the tender mercies of the *Warder*, only expressing our own conviction that the Major is not so fashioned as to be unduly influenced by New Year or other festivities. We trust the Fenelon Falls marksmen will show up on the range next summer.

Canadians who look forward to the time when the British War Office will turn to Canada for a regular supply of army remounts may find satisfaction in the reports just made to the Imperial authorities for the past year. From these it appears that though considerable efforts have been made to increase the reserve of horses for army purposes, the stock of animals actually trained as Cavalry troopers has not been augmented during the year. At the beginning of the year it was reputed that during 1887 a thousand horses had been added to the Cavalry requirements, and that addition has been maintained; but the present stock of trained and training animals is still not sufficient to mount two-thirds of the men.

The correspondent who writes in disapproval of the idea promoted by Lieut. Col. Otter, of having the city corps drilled in camp, in all probability expresses the opinion of nine-tenths of the members of such corps. Soldiering is popular with them as a pastime, a profitable and pleasant way of spending spare hours; and the pleasure is no doubt largely enhanced by the knowledge that the training being acquired is preparing the volunteer to render valuable service, if need be, in the defence of his country. But the moment volunteering takes a man away from his business at inconvenient hours or for inconveniently prolonged periods; the moment, in short, it interferes with his means of livelihood, that moment it must begin to lose popularity. We would be sorry to see any attempt at compelling city corps to go to camp. If there are any whose members, or a sufficiently large proportion of them, can make arrangements for a brief camping experience, well and good. By all means encourage them to go under canvas. But

take no regiments, or fragments of regiments, out unwillingly. After all, would not the purpose be served by having the officers and non-commissioned officers only, for instruction in the practical work pertaining to camp life? It is of comparatively little importance how much or how little the men know of such special duties, provided their natural intelligence is such that they are able to execute directions given them, and their officers and non-commissioned officers are sufficiently well posted to know what instructions to give. A painful experience often met with in connection with the training camps for the rural corps, is to see untrained officers mystify and distract the men of their companies by giving them all sorts of absurd commands.

"In the best informed Service circles," says the *United Services Gazette*, "there is a pretty general opinion that the adoption of such a small calibre as .303 for the magazine rifle of the British Army is unwise. The bullets of the new cartridges are very little thicker than an ordinary pencil, and it is considered that the shock of their impact will not be nearly so disabling to a man as that of the larger and heavier Martini bullet. The fiat of the Ordnance Committee has, however, gone forth in favour of the smaller bullet. Is there no time to alter it, and must it be regarded as final?"

We congratulate Lieut.-Col. J. M. Gibson, the gallant commanding officer of the 13th Battalion, Hamilton, on his well deserved political promotion to a place in the Ontario cabinet. On Friday last he was sworn in as Provincial Secretary, vice Hon. A. M. Hardy, who has become Commissioner of Crown Lands in place of Hon. T. B. Purdee, resigned on account of ill health. The new Minister is one of the most popular officers in the militia. Col. Gibson's name is familiar to every rifleman as that of one of Canada's crack shots, and one who has keenly interested himself in the management of the business of the Dominion and Provincial rifle associations, in addition to taking part in their competitions. Amongst his achievements in the way of marksmanship may be mentioned the capture of the Prince of Wales Prize at Wimbledon upon one of the three occasions when it has been won by a member of the Canadian team.

Reprinted from *The Week* there appears in this issue an interesting article from Rev. K. L. Jones, Professor of English and German at the Royal Military College, on the subject of the Canadian defensive force. The Professor undoubtedly voices the sentiment of the average Canadian when he condemns as calamitous the suggested substitution of a standing army for the present militia system. Canada must continue to have men permanently embodied to form classes for the officers receiving instruction to practise upon, but she needs a standing army for no other purpose. There is other and more profitable work to be done by her hardy sons. Prof. Jones' suggestion that drill should be made a part of the school system, will we are sure meet with favour. In fact the boys of many of the public and high schools of the province are already being drilled, and the Government has marked its approval of such early training by the provision made for the equipment and instruction of associations for drill in educational institutions.