

proper knowledge of time, place and mode of saluting each other.

Everyone knows a salute may be perfectly correct and to the letter of regulation and yet be far from respectful. That form of salute, obligatory or voluntary, is, I trust, unknown in the smart and excellent volunteer corps of "this Canada of ours." I enclose my card, not for publication and remain

Yours very truly

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Frontiles of Country Corps.

Editor Military Gazette.

Sir.—After the formation of the Canadian militia (for at first all corps were treated alike) there gradually began to be a difference in the treatment as to drill and organization of those battalions which had their headquarters in the cities and those who had their headquarters in towns or in the country. At first all battalions drilled at Battalion or Company headquarters and were ordered to drill in Brigade camps every three or four years. Soon under the plea of economy the city battalions were ordered to drill at Battalion headquarters, and later, the battalions having headquarters in towns or in the country, were ordered into Brigade camps for instruction only every other year. About this time a distinction arose between these and the battalions in cities, who were called city corps, while the others were called Rural corps. This is a distinction that never should have been made, for while it would benefit the city battalions to be ordered into a Brigade camp once in every four or five years, it would certainly improve the battalions now designated as rural to have four years out of five drill at company and battalion headquarters.

No one who attends the annual camps of instruction of the Canadian militia can doubt for a moment that the non-commissioned officers and men, and in some cases the officers, of the rural corps, though doing the best they can under trying circumstances to make themselves effective, are very deficient in knowledge of their duties, esprit de corps, and that soldierly feeling which appears to such advantage in our city battalions. Want of knowledge is perhaps more noticeable among the non-commissioned officers of a rural corps than any other rank or class of the service; and it is clear that a good regimen cannot be maintained without good non-commissioned officers. Officers of rural corps cannot, under the present system, procure or instruct men to non-commissioned officers. The officers themselves labour under great disadvantages, and while you find officers of city battalions all of them conversant to a certain extent with their work and able to give their companies some instruction, it is certainly a fact that members or officers of rural corps are hardly able to instruct their companies in the formation of "fours" or in the "turnings."

Since the city corps have drilled at their headquarters and the rural corps have been ordered to drill in Brigade camps, the difference between the efficiency of the rural corps and the city corps has been becoming

more marked from year to year; and, there are a number of good officers in the country corps, they are unable to improve their battalions much under the present regulations for drill.

The rural corps suffers under the present regulations in a great many ways. It is (with few exceptions) unable to turn out a full battalion to the twelve days training once every two years, and the non-commissioned officers and men are of poor quality and without much military spirit. There is no enthusiasm in the county for its battalion (owing principally to its never being seen); and when the men assemble to go to camp they are often laughed at and discouraged. Very many good men find it difficult to get away to camp, and the officers, who are often busy men, find it particularly hard. Many good men, and men of social position in the country, would be officers in our rural corps if it were not for the camps which come at a time of the year when it is impossible for them to leave their businesses or professions, and many of the present officers of the rural corps lose much money, through their having to go to the Brigade camps. The towns and villages in which the companies are recruited never see the companies drilling and on parade, and there is nothing to encourage the military spirit of the young men, and consequently means of recruiting have to be restored to which are degrading to both officers and men.

All these causes have combined to make it almost impossible to have an efficient rural corps (in comparison to the efficiency of the city corps). The city corps is becoming more efficient every day, while the rural corps is not as efficient now as it was twenty-five years ago.

This state of affairs is recognized by the rural corps officers, and many of the best of them often consider the question of resigning their commissions, as they do not like to see their battalions and companies getting weaker, and the old esprit de corps of the regiment dying out—no new officers coming in—with hard work in camp and nothing to show for it—lost time and money and no thanks.

If this is the state of the rural battalion can anything be done to improve the present situation, which I do not think I have overdrawn? I have thought a good deal about this question and have had the opportunities of judging the systems of both the city and country corps. It is suggested that if the rural corps were ordered into camp every year the difficulty would be overcome. Would a system of yearly drill in Brigade camp do the rural corps good or would it only aggravate the evils above enumerated? It is certain that if an officer finds it hard to leave his business once every two years for twelve days' training he would find it doubly hard to leave his business every year for the same period. And further I cannot see how the rural corps are to be improved as militia unless a better class of men are persuaded to join the ranks. Many of the best classes of militiamen cannot, or will not, go to camps of annual training every two years or every year. The military spirit in the country would not be improved by annual camps. The only way to increase the mili-

tary spirit and to recruit a company or battalion is to allow the parades to be seen where the recruiting is to be done. After all recruiting is the first thing to be considered. An efficient militia cannot be got unless our best men take an interest in it.

I cannot see any reason why the system of drilling for the most part at headquarters cannot be applied to the rural corps. I know that in the battalion to which I belong a better class of officers and men and as many of them as would be wanted could be obtained for drill at company and battalion headquarters and on the same terms as city corps, that is, the service to be without pay and that the men devote their pay to military objects and to keeping up the battalion.

Under the present regulations three fourths of the residents of the county do not know anything of the battalion and have never seen a company of it on parade. How much easier it would be to recruit a company if men in uniform were occasionally seen on parade or on duty.

By drilling at the battalion and company headquarters every year the interest would be kept up all the time and officers, and non-commissioned officers would have an incentive to read up and become acquainted with their duties. Under a system of drill at company headquarters the rural corps could be drilled every year with very little more expense to the country than is now expended for twelve days' once every two years, for there would be no transport or rations to be paid for. If system of annual drills at battalion and company headquarters were adopted with the example of the present city corps, I have no doubt that the rural corps would become in a short time much more efficient than they are to-day.

It is objected to this system that it was tried and found wanting. It must be born in mind, however, that the officers to-day who have passed their examinations at the Schools are much more competent to instruct than the officers of twenty years ago, and ought to be competent to instruct their companies, and with the practice that drill at company headquarters would give them, would be competent and efficient instructors.

By drill at company headquarters young men who would become good officers and non-commissioned officers would be attracted, and would be induced to join the company, and the want of young officers and non-commissioned officers which is so seriously felt in country battalions, would be avoided. Fathers do not like often to allow young boys to go to camp, but if drill were at company headquarters young men of about eighteen years of age would join and these make the best soldiers.

It must be remembered that there is no money in service in the Canadian militia, even if the pay is increased for either officers or men, if efficient battalions are maintained, and all that the Government can do is to reduce the expense to the militiaman of what is to him a pleasant duty. For this reason it seems to me that all attempts at reform by increase of pay would be useless, but something ought to be done to make the service in the rural corps something more than twelve days'