

# THE CANADIAN MILITIA GAZETTE

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## Topics of the Week.

### The Militia Annual Report.

The report of the Department of Militia and Defence for the year 1889 has been laid before Parliament by the Minister, Sir Adolphe Caron. As usual it bristles with recommendations for the improvement of the force, but from the fact that only the ordinary appropriation has been asked from Parliament for the year commencing 1st July next, it seems to have been determined upon already that such of these recommendations as involve any extra expense are not to be carried out.

The Deputy Minister, Col. C. E. Panet, deals with the finances, and also gives some statistics which help to make the financial statement more readily understood and therefore more interesting. For instance, we find the permanent forces, on which the schools are based, cost half a million of the total of \$1,364,779 of the militia expenditure of the year, exclusive of the military pension list of \$31,939. From the schools 350 officers and non-commissioned officers received certificates, so that if we take the institutions as schools only, without calculating the value they may possess as a standing army, it is found that the cost of training each scholar has been in round numbers \$1,350. The inquiry suggests itself, if equally beneficial results could not be obtained at much less expense.

It is satisfactory to note that the cartridge factory at Quebec is in good working order, and turning out Snider ammunition in quantities more than sufficient to supply the demand. The Superintendent is quite proud of his product, and not satisfied with quoting statistics of doubtful meaning to show that the 1889 manufacture is better than that of 1888, earnestly proceeds to point out that at the D.R.A. meeting better results were obtained with the Snider rifle and Canadian ammunition than with the Martini rifle and English made ammunition. "In the Dominion of Canada Match," the Deputy makes him say, "the 78's were counted out, and in the Governor General's, with Martini, the 62's were not counted out, showing better general scoring with the Snider than with the Martini under the same conditions of range." The weak point about this argument is that it took 87 points (not 62) to win a prize in the Governor-General's Match, against 78 in its Snider contemporary. Fortunately all shooting men know the ammunition to be much more reliable than the statistics paraded in its support.

The General Officer Commanding reports having visited most of the Schools, and each of these useful if expensive institutions he found to be in need of much that, if provided, will add to their usefulness and cost. In connection with our recent references to the expected military superannuation bill, it is interesting to note that General Middleton some time ago submitted a detailed scheme to the Government. He reiterates many of his recommendations of former years with respect to the schools, the district camps, the equipment, and the necessity of giving more encouragement to the shooting of the force in general. In this last connection he advocates the establishment of a school for musketry instruction only—a Canadian Hythe.

Col. Walker Powell, Adjutant General, contributes this instructive memorandum on the subject of the disposition of the money available for drill.

"The sum voted for drill and training during the financial year 1889-90 was \$250,000, therefore only a portion of the force could be paid for drills performed.

"The Active force, exclusive of the Permanent Corps, numbers 36,395, of which 10,055 are in cities and 26,340 in the country parts. The proportion of the strength of different arms in the cities is: cavalry, 482; field batteries, 722; garrison artillery, 1,181; engineers, 134; infantry, 7,536. In rural parts: cavalry, 1,462; field artillery, 718; garrison artillery, 742; engineers, 45; infantry, 23,373. The number of officers and men exclusive of the horses of mounted officers of infantry, and of the officers and men of cavalry and artillery, which could be paid, were estimated at 19,225.

"The plan adopted, as in years past, was to drill the whole of the city corps, except field batteries and corps which belonged to rural organizations, for twelve days at their local headquarters, and to order as many of the rural corps and field batteries into camps of exercise for twelve days, as, with the city corps, would make up the total strength that the appropriation provided for. These were distributed amongst the several Military Districts in proportion to the strength of the Active Militia in each, as follows:—No. 1, 2,420; No. 2, 3,442; No. 3, 1,858; No. 4, 1,135; No. 5, 2,712; No. 6, 1,287; No. 7, 2,147; No. 8, 1,304; No. 9, 1,932; No. 10, 431; No. 11, 230; No. 12, 327; total, 19,225. The strength of city corps authorized to drill at their headquarters was deducted from the total strength authorized for drill; the remainder, which included about one-third of the rural corps in the Dominion, represented the number which could be concentrated in camps of exercise."

Each of the Deputy Adjutant Generals has recommendations to make. Taking them in the numerical order of their districts, Lieut.-Col. Smith asks cheaper ammunition so as to facilitate that practice which alone helps the rifleman along the way to perfection. Lieut.-Col. Otter asks an annual issue of ammunition for practice whether the drill is annual or otherwise; he again advocates camp training for city corps. Lieut.-Col. Van Straubenzee recommends that the camp for the combined districts over which he presides be held regularly at Kingston. Lieut.-Col. Houghton asks that rubber sheets be issued to keep the men off the wet ground while at camp. He complains of the poor physique of the recruits, there being too many boys and old men. He considers that the time of camp is insufficient for training, only six and a half working days being realized in his district out of the nominal twelve days. Lieut.-Col. d'Orsonnens is very outspoken in his report, the first he has had an opportunity of making as Deputy Adjutant General of No. 6 District. He does not hesitate to note the decidedly weak points of several of the corps, and to instance desirable improvements. For example, he found the arms in many cases stored away in private houses and garrets, and has taken steps to secure more suitable armouries at each headquarters. He recommends the retirement of the antiquated cross-belts and ammunition pouches attached, as he considers them worse than useless. Lieut.-Col. Duchesnay notes with regret the