

GOSSIP OF THE MILITIA.

The sacrifice of time necessary to secure Officers Certificates.

Recruiting for "B" Battery—Morris Tube competitions at St. John—A suggested programme for the Montreal Brigade—Ottawa Militiamen on snowshoes—Torontos penchant for smoking parties—The Peterboro Rangers warmly praised—Big gun practice in British Columbia.

Ottawa.

SNOWSHOEING gives indication of being the popular sport with the Ottawa volunteers this winter. The clubs in connection with the several corps are making preparations for the season's work, and a scheme is proposed looking to the holding of some "garrison tramps" in the near future.

At the sixth annual meeting of the 43rd Rifles showshoe club, the president, Capt. and Adjutant Evans, occupied the chair. Sergt. Huband presented the annual report of the committee, which showed the finances of the club to be in a flourishing condition. The progress made during the past season was the greatest in its history, the number of tramps taken having been thirteen, and the average attendance thirty-five, or about sixty per cent of the total membership. The number of members promises to increase largely during the coming year, the strength of the regiment having substantially increased since last winter. The programme for next season includes several new features, and the boys look forward to a very pleasant winter's fun. The election of officers resulted as follows:—Honorary president, Lieut.-Col. White; honorary 1st vice-president, Major Walsh; honorary 2nd vice-president, Major Anderson; president, Capt. Evans; 1st vice-president, Colour-Sergt. Grant; 2nd vice-president, Bandmaster Greenfield; secretary-treasurer, Sergt. A. W. Huband; whipper-in, Corporal Wills; committee, Sergt. Bray, Corp. Jones, Ptes. Abbott, Clendinnen and Carruthers. It was decided to tramp on Monday nights, and as soon as the weather and snow permit of snowshoeing. The secretary will notify members of the date of the opening tramp.

The Guards' snowshoe club held their annual meeting on Monday evening last, Colour-Sergt. Mailleue taking the chair in the absence of the president and vice-presidents. The annual report was presented by the secretary-treasurer, Lieut. Taylor. It showed the finances to be in a satisfactory condition. The election of officers resulted as follows: Patron, Lieut.-Gen. Middleton; honorary president, Lieut.-Col. Macpherson; president, Capt. Toller; vice-presidents, Major Todd and Capt. Heron; captain, Lieut. Hodgins; whipper-in, Colour-Sergt. Mailleue; secretary-treasurer, Colour-Sergt. Ross; committee, Colour-Sergts. Chesley, Davis and Taylor, Sergts. Cunningham and Colman, Corpl. May and Pte. Pegg. It was decided that the regular club night should be Wednesday.

The New Edinburgh Ward company of the Rifles, No. 6, last week gave an amateur theatrical entertainment in the Grand Opera House in aid of the equipment fund. The bill consisted of the comedy "Our Domestic" and the farce "Special Performances," both of which were creditably rendered. The attendance was large, and the affair was a financial success. His Excellency the Governor-General and Lady Lansdowne graced the occasion with their presence. His Excellency has donated \$25 towards the funds of the company.

Montreal.

MAJOR THOMAS ATKINSON, of the Garrison Artillery, has in a recent letter to the *Star* made some valuable suggestions looking to the welfare of the Montreal brigade. They are as follows:—

"First, I would suggest that a representative from each corps might arrange to deliver a series of lectures during the long winter months, on some of the undermentioned subjects, viz.: Military Tactics, Military History, Militia Law, Hints on Drill and Interior Economy, Musketry Instruction, Fortifications, Military Engineering, Gunnery, Outpost Duty, or any other subject that will tend to interest and benefit the excellent force we have in this city.

"In order to increase the interest in these lectures I would respectfully suggest that each lecturer on the night of his lecture might arrange to have a band present so that we have a short promenade concert after the close of the lecture. This, I am sure, would tend to foster a brotherly feeling amongst the various city corps, and inculcate that *esprit de corps* which alone can make up an efficient corps.

"Our respected D. A. G. might start the ball rolling by delivering the first lecture.

"From all appearances we will not get possession of our excellent drill hall before the spring. Now, would it not be a good idea, when it is handed over by the Minister of Public Works to the Militia Department, to have a grand military demonstration of some sort—either a review or grand promenade concert in the drill hall by the united city military bands? Or we might have military garrison games, in the drill hall, if handed over before spring; if not, on St. Helen's Island.

"The above few hints are offered with only one object in view, viz., to bring the various branches of the city force together to have an interchange of opinions on military matters, and in order that we may all learn something that will be of interest to us individually and to the force generally.

"The lectures might be delivered in the Victoria Armory; an admission fee might be charged to officers only to cover rental and thus add a trifle to the Armory fund of the Vics."

The *Star* suggests another exercise, which from its novelty could not fail to awaken keen interest on the part of participators and beholders. This is, that the militiamen might "be shown how to erect field fortifications on a blackboard." The *Star* says it *can* be done.

Toronto.

ARRANGEMENTS have been made whereby the n.c.o. of the Queen's Own will have an opportunity of attending a series of drills during the coming winter. The sergeants will parade every Friday evening, the corporals every Wednesday.

Notwithstanding rumours to the contrary, the Toronto Garrison Battery is still drilling. I hear that they will probably be inspected by the D.A.G. on the 5th Dec.

The night of the 1st December promises to be a busy one. The Queen's Own band will have a concert at the Pavilion. "A" company Royal Grenadiers (with the Boomer Rifle Association) will hold its annual dinner at the Albion Hotel.

Final arrangements for the first dinner of the ex-members of the Queen's Own have been completed. It will be held on the 15th December.

Major Delamere, Q.O.R., had a very enjoyable smoking party at his house on the 24th instant. Amongst others present were Col. Gillmor, Col. Allan, and several foreigners, including "The McIntyre," "He-who-you-don't-know-who-he-is-looking-at," "Bon-wang," &c. Smoking parties are evidently going to be "the thing" this winter. Mr. Myles, T.F.B., and several others have out invitations for them.

London.

AT the close of the D. R. A. matches this year, a good deal was said about the Martini-Henry rifle, and after the return of the 7th team from Ottawa an application was made for 12, but so far nothing has been heard of either the rifles or the application.

I am acquainted with several officers who would gladly qualify if they had an opportunity of doing so without neglecting their business, and I can see no reason why officers who cannot spare time to attend the military school should not be met half-way. One of this class remarked to me the other day, that he had paid \$140 to "rig" himself out for the service of his country, but when his country required his business to go to 'pot,' it was time to draw the line right there. How would something after the following plan meet their views:

Let a board composed of thoroughly competent officers be assembled in each camp, for the examination of all candidates; having as president the commandant of one of the schools, the other members to be of any rank, and selected from any corps to which the candidate does not belong (if possible). Candidates should forward their names to the B. M. of the district, at least two weeks before the formation of the camp. The examination to last 5 days, the first two of which to be taken up by papers, in the form of question and answer; printed forms to be sent from headquarters, under cover, to the president; papers to be handed to each candidate on his reporting to the board that he is ready to begin work; after which candidates not to be allowed to communicate with each other or quit the room or tent, unless their papers are first given up to the president. Two days of this work would be sufficient to test the capabilities of any officer; provided that he gets the right kind of questions. The last three days may be taken up as follows: 3rd day—squad and company drill; 4th day—battalion drill, sword drill and brigade drill if required; 5th day—guard and outpost duties, shelter trench and a little minor tactics; as for instance, the attack and defence of a bridge, or the attack and defence of a convoy, etc. And, by the bye, may I ask why minor tactics are not practised in our annual camps; as in my opinion, if anything is calculated to give a man an insight into what is required of him on active service, that 'anything' is minor tactics, and I will venture to say, that more useful military knowledge can be gained in one day so employed, than in six days of the usual drill.

In order to prevent officers making excuses as to their inability to procure the necessary books without going to a lot of trouble, why cannot a supply be forwarded from headquarters to the D. A. G. of the district, the cost being recovered from those requiring them, through the pay rolls. Officers should be required to produce their books at the annual inspection of their corps.

In suggesting that something be done to meet the wishes of a considerable body of officers, I have no desire to see revived that worst of all inventions for 'pitchforking' an officer into a commission, viz.: the old Volunteer Board, and would like to see a G. O. requiring all officers with V. B. after their names to obtain a M. S. certificate, or a certificate from the above suggested board, and failing to do so within 12 months, reverting them to provisional rank.

PIPECLAY.

Peterborough.

ON Thursday last Lieut.-Col. Villiers, D.A.G. of the 3rd military district, inspected the 57th battalion, Peterborough. The D.A.G. was accompanied by Major King, district paymaster. The battalion mustered at the drill shed at two o'clock in the afternoon 230 men strong and marched to the Riverside Park, Lieut.-Col. Rogers in command. The inspection was watched by a large assemblage of people. The movements which the battalion went through were interesting and exceedingly well done. The Deputy Adjutant General spent about an hour putting the men through different exercises and then ordered a march back to the drill shed. At the drill shed Col. Villiers addressed the battalion. He said: "I can assure you that on coming to Peterborough this morning to inspect you I really felt very nervous. If I inspected you last year I would certainly have found fault with you for many reasons, but as Gen. Middleton inspected you I could say nothing. The 57th as a rural regiment, was always a splendid corps, and really one of the best in the district, but I could not say that of it last year. This year I am surprised, simply amazed, at the position you stand in to-day. The proficiency of your movements, your steadiness in the field, your physique and general appearance really surprised me to-day, and according to what I say now I intend to report. The regiment is a great credit to the colonel and officers, and I hope you will continue in your present state of efficiency. You have a good drill shed, good accoutrements, new and clean clothing, a very fine band, and everything to keep you in an efficient state."

The number of officers and men in the battalion is as follows: field and staff officers, 7; captains, 5; lieutenants, 6; staff-sergeants, 5; sergeants, 18; corporals, 18; buglers, 6; band, 21; privates, 181; total strength, 267.

In the evening an officers' dinner was held at Morgan's Hotel, at which Col. Villiers and Major King were guests.

Halifax.

ABOUT twenty-five Haligonians have been enlisted by Recruiting-Sergeant Saunders for "B" Battery, Quebec. In an interview by a local newspaper man, Sergeant Saunders told him that he wished to secure between twenty-five and thirty, the balance of the fifty required to fill the present vacancies to be obtained in Montreal, a recruiting sergeant having gone to that city. Only men of good character are wanted. They must be single and between the ages of 20 and 45, and not under 5 ft. 8 inches in height. The sergeant was also anxious to secure some bandmen. In announcing the sergeant's arrival the papers gave the rates of pay allowed in the artillery—commencing with the lieut.-colonels at \$4 per day; majors at \$3; captains at \$3; and so on down the scale, winding up with the modest 40c for gunners. Your correspondent offered to fill any gap in the ranks of the lieutenant-colonels, in fact even went so far as to state that he wouldn't mind taking as low as \$3 a day for a captaincy, but application was made too late, their being no vacancies except for gunners or musicians, so he remains in *statu quo*.

The Provincial Rifle Association will hold its annual meeting on the 29th November at the Young Men's Christian Association rooms in this city.