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THE CANADIAN

# Military Gazette

Successor to the Canadian Militia Gazette.

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MONTREAL, MAY 1, 1895.

## Notes and Comments

In the letter of "Old 95," published elsewhere, will be found ample justification for the remarks made in these columns some months back with regard to the shortages of officers in the Active Militia. At the now historical Montreal banquet the ex-Minister of Militia undertook to dispute the statement that there was any glaring shortage of officers in the force, and took occasion to refer to the number of certificates taken at the schools of military instruction as justification of his contention that the force was in a satisfactory state. How absurd the boast of efficiency looks now with "Old 95's" deadly parallel showing the real facts of the case in cold type. And how absurd too

appears the present system of trying to keep the active militia supplied with qualified officers.

Out of a total complement of 2243, the force only has 1234 qualified combatant officers; not much more than fifty per cent. The fact that there are no less than 606 unqualified officers in the force, two of them masquerading as majors no less, and 28 as captains, reveals a deplorable state of affairs that should be put a stop to at once. The provisional appointment of one of the majors dates back to 1885; that of the other to 1887. The appointment of one of the provisionally appointed captains even goes back to 1878. If the force is divorced from politics why on earth were these appointments ever made, and why have they been allowed to continue? But of course the great point brought out by our valued correspondent's interesting letter is the fact that the present means for providing trained officers for the force are wholly inadequate.

Just what the difficulty is it is perhaps pretty hard to say off hand, though most of those interested in the prosperity of the force must have a pretty shrewd suspicion where the trouble lies. We are firmly of the belief that the subject is one well worthy of a thorough parliamentary enquiry. A large proportion of the money voted by parliament for militia purposes is devoted to the maintenance of schools to keep the force supplied with qualified officers. If the schools cannot perform the work required of them parliament has the right to know why and wherefore. As to the importance of the matter there

can be no question. How can a military force be considered as in any degree efficient when it has only half its quota of even nominally efficient officers?

The matter of appointments to the permanent corps of the active militia is another promising subject for a parliamentary enquiry. Successive heads of the militia department have promised that the graduates of the Royal Military College at Kingston should have the preference in the allotment of the commissions to the permanent corps, and the promises have been just as regularly broken, and broken, too, without the least particle of excuse.

We do not imagine that none but those who have passed through Kingston are competent to take commissions in the permanent corps. We believe that there are men of pronounced military talents and a very extended and valuable military knowledge in the active militia who have never seen Kingston, but would be of great service to the country as officers of the permanent corps. Such men, having experience, a natural military aptitude and devotion, should, we believe, be given the preference in the awarding of commissions to the permanent corps. But they are few and far between, and are almost always forgotten when appointments come to be made.

Strange to say so are the graduates of the Royal Military College. This institution cost the country about as much as the schools of military instruction which are supposed to keep the active militia sup-