

THE CANADIAN MILITIA GAZETTE

A WEEKLY JOURNAL DEVOTED TO THE INTERESTS OF THE ACTIVE FORCE OF THE DOMINION.

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CORRESPONDENCE.

The MILITIA GAZETTE aims at being the recognized medium of instruction and information for Canadian militiamen and rifle shots. Communications on the subjects to which its pages are devoted are respectfully invited. Anonymous communications will not be regarded. No name will be published, except with the writer's consent. The editors will not be responsible for the views of correspondents.

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COMMENT AND CRITICISM.

We have learned very little as to the progress made by the troops on their homeward journey, except that those coming by rail were expected to reach Winnipeg on Saturday and Sunday, while those on the steamers are somewhere between Prince Albert and Winnipeg, and may arrive at any time. It will be probably fully a week, therefore, before they reach Toronto. In the meantime money is being voted by all the municipalities interested for the purpose of according to the local detachments a warm reception on their arrival; and it is probable that the eagerness of all to reach their homes will prevent any combined military display such as under other circumstances would have been desirable. We may here explain that some remarks made in this connection by the Minister of Militia, on Cartier Square, at the review of the Victoria Rifles, were inadvertently, in our last issue, said to have been made at the closing of the Royal Military College, which he was unable to attend.

The Government have announced their intention of awarding to each man who took part in the suppression of the North west rebellion, a grant of land in the country he helped to save, and this liberal action will doubtless meet with the hearty concurrence of the House and of the people at large. The proposition is to grant to each member of the

force a free homestead of 320 acres in any unclaimed Dominion lands, subject to the conditions that the same shall be selected and entered by 1st June, 1886, and shall be resided upon and cultivated in accordance with the usual homestead provisions; the grantee also to have the privilege of appointing any substitute who may be eligible under the provisions. Also, that to those who do not wish to homestead, scrip to the value of \$30, acceptable in payment of any Dominion land dues, shall be given instead of the homestead. By this regulation every man will secure a substantial reward in addition to his very small militia pay, while a good colonizing agent will be put in action.

We publish a letter from a valued correspondent, casting grave reflections on rifle associations. While we are inclined to agree in some of his objections he seems to take an extreme view of the case. It is undoubtedly true that the management of associations being usually in the hands of active shots these are apt to frame the programme from a selfish standpoint and leave few chances for beginners. But on the other hand the question arises, do those whose place it is to lead, but who do not shoot themselves, unselfishly exert themselves for the benefit of green shots? We fear not. Again, a prize competition is not the place to teach a man to shoot; its object is rather to provide some amusement and encouragement for those who have already attained a fair degree of skill; and the preliminary training should be done in the squad or in the battalion. Let company officers, let sergeant-instructors of musketry, let adjutants—aye, let lieutenant-colonels commanding, see that every man under their charge is taught to shoot, and then let them enter for prize competitions so arranged that there shall be fair chances for all grades of shots.

The larger rifle prize competitions promise this year to be quite as successful as last year. In this issue we publish an abridgment of the New Brunswick programme, which is substantially the same as last year's, and give a comparative review of the D.R.A. programme, which shows a marked advance, especially in the money prizes for the matches not included in the grand aggregate; a change which we predict will have the effect of encouraging the attendance of a number of new shots. From this to the end of September rifle shooting will occupy a prominent place in our militia system; and we hope to keep up a reputation for full accounts of all competitions.

The small proportion of the rank and file who come to the front as marksmen is often alluded to, but can be easily explained; for besides the fact that those who can best afford to take commissions can also best afford to shoot, the best shots are usually old hands who have often stuck by the militia force simply on account of the interest they take in rifle shooting, and so naturally become the best qualified for promotion. Numerous instances can be recalled of men who first made a shooting record in the ranks, and who now wear a field officer's spurs. Nor is skill with the rifle thrown away if it is possessed by an