

THE CANADIAN MILITIA GAZETTE

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

First Year.
VOL. I, No. 37.

Ottawa, Tuesday, 19th January, 1886.

\$1.50 per Annum in advance
Single Copies Five Cents.

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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Should be made by Registered Letter, Post Office Order or Draft. For Great Britain, each dollar may be taken as equivalent to 4s., and cents as half-pence. All communications must be addressed to

THE CANADIAN MILITIA GAZETTE,
Box 316, OTTAWA, Canada.

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COMMENT AND CRITICISM.

An informal meeting of the Ottawa members of the Dominion Rifle Association Council was held on the 14th to consider the annual report, preparatory to its submission to the whole council. Lt.-Cols. Ross, White, Panet, Bacon, and Macpherson, Majors Macpherson and Anderson, and Captains Perley and Toller were present. The report is of the usual nature, sketching the work of the Association for the past year and making some suggestions for the future. The whole report will be submitted to all members of the council in galley form before being printed, and will probably be ready for distribution as soon as this number of the GAZETTE.

From the *Army and Navy Gazette* we learn that it is intended to make some changes in the *personnel* of the British army during the present year, by which the army list will be materially cleared and the services of the most capable officers of high rank secured to the country. Just six months ago we alluded to the advantage which would accrue to our force if the age rule were generally carried into effect here. It can do no possible harm to refer to the subject again, especially a little has been done in the interval. Fully one-third of our commanding officers have held their positions for from ten to twenty-five years, and over a score are the only commanding officers their regiments have ever known. These men have, in their time, done good

work and should receive every consideration, but, while there may be wisdom in grey hairs, there is not that enthusiasm, energy, and activity necessary to keep a regiment in a high state of efficiency. The enforcement of the rule might not be followed by the best results in every case, but, as experience has shown that officers will not retire of their own accord, and invidious distinctions would cause much heart-burning and jealousy, it is better that it should be enforced in the same cast-iron way that it is in England, and that all officers should be retired on reaching the regulation limit of age. The stream of promotion that would follow would be an encouragement and incentive to other officers, and the effect would soon be seen in the improvement of the force.

The praiseworthy attempt of which we spoke a few weeks past to procure the abolition of the rule under which retired officers are deprived of their pensions on accepting service under a colonial government is going steadily forward. A case showing the poor working of the present regulation is that of the gallant Major-General Strange, who commanded the Edmonton column in the recent rebellion, and whose march of seven hundred miles, through an almost unknown and uninhabited country, was one of the wonders of the campaign. We have been informed that, under the rule referred to, he lost his pension during the time he was in the Canadian service. As he receives the retiring allowances of a major-general, and his pay in the North-west was the full pay of a colonel, it will be seen that the difference between the two scarcely left him the pay of a subaltern, not a very satisfactory result after such magnificent work. We are quite certain that the sword of this brave soldier will always be at Canada's service, but neither he nor any other British officer should be asked to draw in our defence at a personal pecuniary sacrifice, and we think that a proper representation from our government would do much to effect the abrogation of the obnoxious rule.

The noodle's notions are now finished, and must have furnished food for reflection to most of our readers; and we hope will be productive of good in gradually impressing corps commanders, district staff officers, and even those at headquarters, with the conviction that here in Canada, where special conditions have to be encountered and special obstacles overcome, special arrangements must be made to suit these altered circumstances; that holding fast to old established rules is not always advisable either in the matter of clothing, drill, or musketry instruction. The notions have already met with some criticism and will doubtless encounter more; in fact we are not ourselves inclined to go so far as the noodle on some points, but for all that it is a decided advantage that he has put his views in the strongest possible way—luke-warm views will ever meet but a cool reception—and we are only sorry they have come to an end.

To those who would like to have the notions complete we will send a set of all the numbers containing them, from I to XI, or GAZETTE Nos. 27 to 37 inclusive, on receipt of 25 cents.