

The service members at Ottawa do not appear to be greatly exciting themselves about the much-needed militia reforms. Parliament some of these days may receive a rude awakening, and realize that there are other national issues besides tariffs and prohibition. We maintain that militia reform is a matter of most vital importance to Canada, and in support of our contention we have merely to point to the last dozen or so reports of general officers commanding. Do the independent members of Parliament ever read the militia blue books?

About Matters in Camp, Drill, Duty, Canteens, Etc.

To the Editor of the MILITARY GAZETTE.

Take an average country battalion of six companies into camp, and its strength ought to be from 200 to 210 men, or 35 men to a company. That is a fair turn out in these days, and if they all got their full nine days' drill, and the same for the other two years of their enlistment, the result would be fairly satisfactory, though their whole three years' drill would be one day short of what recruits for the British militia receive each and every year. But about a third of the battalion does not drill at all, and of the other two-thirds, half or more is never again in the ranks. The non-effectives are: First, that indispensable adjunct of militia glory, the band, which disposes of 20 men, add six buglers and 12 cooks, and one company is accounted for. Next, Sergt.-Major, Drum-Major, Quartermaster-Sergeant, Hospital Sergeant, Orderly-Room Clerk and Paymaster's Clerk, puts six more out of the ranks; add 18 duty sergeants, 2 men for the butts, 4 or 5 sick or disabled, 4 or 5 camp orderlies in guard to keep loafers from stealing great coats and blankets (regimental guards being abolished under the new rules). Add a few men for stable duty and officers' mess, to equalize the sergeants being bunched, and you have B Company disposed of. Then C Company is at the rifle range, and out of your six companies you have three companies or rather squads, doing their drill in single ranks. Then the system and hours for drill (which are far too long) are killing the spirit of officers and men, and are directly in the teeth of the Queen's regulations. Six hours drill, three hours consecutive under a burning sun and in heavy winter uniform, knocks the tar and temper out of everybody. There is no drill, of any practical benefit, learned in camp, except facings and turnings and the manual of arms, and those could be as well or better done at home and at far less expense. Company drill is only a glimmer. Battalion drill is not touched. Colonels have nothing to say about the work or do with the drill of their battalions in camp. The small chance they get in two years of

making themselves acquainted with their companies, and handling them as a regiment, they are not allowed to take, his discretionary power is "nil" over the battalion he is supposed to command, yet if a riot occurred, or a raid made, he would be ordered at once to meet the one or suppress the other. The system is absurd; there is too much red tape; officers and men are willing to learn, and are ready and willing to do their duty, but they don't care to be treated as school boys, with the daily orders from the brigade office, for goose step, or catechism. In my humble opinion, sir, better results would follow more freedom of action. Officers know better than the brigadiers the capacities and knowledge of their companies, and too much to keep the man who is possibly the best shot or best drilled in his company, roasting for hours alongside the fellow who for the first time in his life has uniform on his back or a rifle in his hand. Now a word or so about canteens. The order, no doubt, will catch the cranks and the faddists, but the expected benefits will be another story. Under the existing arrangements, there was but very little drunkenness in camp. A man could get his glass of beer and bit of tobacco at his own canteen, but now, under pretence of getting tobacco, he will go into town and come back crazy with bad whiskey, raise a row with the police, guard room all night, orderly room in the morning, and the usual consequences following a breach of discipline are the results of an ill advised and unreasonable order. Yours, etc.,

April 7th, 1894.

SUBSCRIBER.

"My Gal."

I.

I ain't no famous 'ero
Enough to talk about,
But just a British soldier
Faked up for walkin' out.
And the uniform ain't gaudy
As they gives to Infantry,
But I'm proud of wot I am because
There's one wot's proud o' me.
I've 'er photergraph in Barricks, stuck up
underneath my shelf.
In a jacket trimmed with himitation fur;
And it makes a soldier feel a sorter prouder
of 'isself
To be loved by a gal like 'er!

II.

I know wot gals thinks takin',
And a serge ain't fit to see
Beside the yaller bra'din'
Of the 'Orse Artillery.
But Mary, she thinks diff'rent,
And I well-nigh sobs with pride
When she says "It ain't the coat I
loves,
But the 'eart wot beats inside."
I've 'er photergraph in Barricks, stuck up
underneath my shelf,
In a jacket trimmed with himitation fur;
And it makes a soldier feel a sorter prouder
of 'eself.
To be loved by a gal like 'er!

—Basil Hood in "Ours."

News of the Service.

NOTE.—Our readers are respectfully requested to contribute to this department all items of Military News affecting their own corps, districts or friends, coming under their notice. Without we are assisted in this way we cannot make this department as complete as we would desire. Remember that all the doings of every corps are of general interest throughout the entire militia force. You can mail a large package of manuscript, so long as not enclosed in an envelope, for one cent. At any rate, forward copies of your local papers with all references to your corps and your comrades. Address,
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Ottawa.

Lieut.-Col. Prior, of British Columbia, presided at the annual meeting of the Dominion Artillery Association, held on the afternoon of April 5th, in the Railway Committee-room of the House of Commons. His Excellency the Governor-General and the Minister of Militia were there, and among the officers in attendance were: Maj.-Gen. Herbert, Lieut.-Colonel Aylmer, Assistant Adjutant-General; Lieut.-Col. Macpherson, Lieut.-Col. Cole, Montreal; Major Mead, Toronto; Capt. Williams, London; Capt. Mackenzie. Gananoque; Lieut.-Col. Maclean, Port Hope; Lieut.-Col. Turnbull, Quebec; Lieut.-Col. Irwin, Inspector of Artillery. Lieut.-Col. Armstrong, president of the association, telegraphed his regrets from St. John.

The Dominion Artillery Association seem to have been overlooked in the matter of the Earl of Derby's prize in much the same way as the Dominion Rifle Association. But while the latter made all pains to keep the fact quiet, the annual report of the Artillery Association, as presented at today's meeting, puts it plainly thus: "The cups usually presented by His Excellency the Governor-General for general efficiency were presented this year by the association. Those donated by the Earl of Derby for 1892 have not yet been received by the winning batteries."

The secretary's report acknowledges the Hamilton Powder Company's special prize of \$100, and the acceptance by the Earl of Aberdeen of the office of patron of the association. The total receipts for the year amounted to \$3,478. The council recommended that the annual practice be held on the range at Orkans Island, instead of at Halifax.

Replying to a vote of thanks proposed by Lieut.-Col. Cole, His Excellency expressed pleasure at being present, and assured the association of his hearty sympathy with the objects of the association, and appreciation of its work.

His Excellency promised not only to contribute towards the prize list, but, further, to manifest his personal interest by attending the meetings of the association.

The Minister of Militia was also passed a vote of thanks, and in the course of his response took occasion to refute certain sensational stories which had been set afloat to the effect that a disagreement had sprung up between the major-general command-