

## Correspondence.

[This paper does not necessarily share the views expressed in correspondence published in its columns, the use of which is freely granted to writers on topics of interest to the Militia.]

## POLITICS AND APPOINTMENTS.

EDITOR MILITIA GAZETTE,—I am more than shocked to hear, in your "Topics of the Week," that until the Millenium comes about, political appointments are bound to rule in the Canadian permanent militia. This is terrible, for the Millenium has disappointed us so often, and it looks as if your paper (representing, as I am sure it does, a very large share of the militia opinion of the country) considered this as a normal condition of affairs, instead of an abnormal one that can only last at most a few decades, until the permanent force is fairly started.

We all know that political appointments do rule in the militia service and probably will do so for some time, as the Canadian public appear more or less apathetic on the subject, and the only thing private individuals can do is to criticize anything very obvious, so as to prevent at least the actual survival of the unfittest, which unqualified appointments seem admirably adapted to bring about.

A certain Nobleman in England, not a hundred years ago, who was in possession of a family seat in the Commons as well as his own in the Lords, declared, on receiving some offence from the party in power, that he would place at the next election his black cook in the House of Commons, and was with difficulty restrained by his friends from doing so. This was an extreme abuse of patronage. What is to prevent some future Minister or other gentleman in power from appointing, under political pressure, some successor of the unqualified black man to the position of the Canadian officer and gentleman, and this long before the Millenium arrives?

In England, (and in what our American cousins call the effete Monarchies of Europe, generally), the Millenium spoken of has long since arrived, and the appointment of an unqualified man to an army commission would raise such a storm in every paper that it would be almost enough to turn out a ministry. We do not seem to have yet arrived at this stage of moral civilization, but we should all have great hopes of in the not far distant future bringing about a state of things which will enable the Canadian officer to be at least the equal of his English brother in arms, and we know what the young Canadian can do from the records of Kingston College.

The last Political Army in Europe was that of Napoleon III, who with some of the best and bravest of troops was totally out-manceuvred and destroyed, thanks (almost entirely) to the superior fitness and education of the Prussian officers.

## MILITAIRE.

## Regimental and Other News.

## The Royal School of Mounted Infantry.

(By "Ajax" in Winnipeg Siftings.)

Life in Fort Osborne is not the really pleasant time that a great many of the uninitiated suppose. There is work every day, work which comes and is performed with almost prison-like regularity. Having an idle day some time ago, I took a walk with the intention of crossing the Osborne street bridge, and having a stroll around Fort Rouge. Passing the barrack gate on Osborne street, I was attracted by a bugler blowing some call, what the call might be was a mystery to your correspondent. A manly looking fellow, who wore what I supposed was his undress uniform, informed me that it was the first dinner bugle. After a few minutes of conversation he told me there would be no objection to my entry, and he very willingly consented to be my guide. I was delighted with what I saw. I was first taken to the stables; such stables and such bronchos are a delight to lovers of horse-flesh; everything seemed complete, and the grooming perfect. After walking through the stables, I asked to be allowed to see the barrack rooms. They seemed to be in perfect order, about sixteen or seventeen men in each room, which appears rather crowded to civilian ideas, each man having an iron bed-cot with his bed tightly rolled up, blankets and sheets neatly folded and bound with a strap, boots and valise hanging on pegs above his head, clothing on the shelf above the belts, arranged with precise regularity. It is only this regularity which makes so many men to live together in comfort.

I then visited the recreation room and was given an introduction to the sergeant in charge, a genial looking young man who gave me much interesting information. The recreation room seemed to be well patronized, some men playing draughts and others billiards, some reading, and all seemed to be enjoying themselves. The sergeant told me that tobacco, cigars and temperance drinks were sold there, and that a great many of the young fellows preferred spending their money and enjoying themselves in the recreation room, to going over to the canteen where

drink of a more ardent nature were sold. The canteen he told me was a necessity in all barracks, as the young fellows who indulged in the stronger fluids would often go the canteen and get liquors without any fear of their being adulterated. The profit on the articles sold there goes into a fund, from which was purchased many articles for the comfort of the whole corps.

I was taken from there to the sergeants' rooms and there was introduced to as fine a lot of fellows as you would see on a day's journey. There is a good billiard table in one room for use of the members of the sergeants' mess; there was another room cosily furnished in which some of the men were playing cards, and others reading and talking; all seemed happy. My guide informed me that although the men played cards, gambling even for the smallest amount was strictly prohibited. After enjoying the hospitality of the sergeants for a while, I took leave of my guide thanking him for his kindness, and receiving a warm invitation to call on him again, which I promised to do.

## The Thirteenth Drill Competition.

A drill competition between the companies of the Thirteenth Battalion has just taken place at their Armoury. Although no special invitations were issued the galleries were well filled by the friends of the competing soldiers, and those present witnessed a good exhibition of drill. There were four prizes awarded, being \$40, \$30, \$20, and \$10 purses. The competition did not merely end with the drill, but included attendance at authorized drills, target practice, and the state of the armouries and accoutrements. Capt McDougall, I.S.C., and Capt. Mutton, Q.O.R., acted as judges. "E" and "G" Companies did not enter for the competition, but the other companies were all present. From the first it was evident that the race was between "B," "C," "D," and "F" Companies, and the result when the totals were scored showed "D" Company to the front. Capt. Ross was warmly congratulated on the success he has scored. Lieut. Tidswell handled "F" Company in splendid shape, and his men did good work, but lost some points in a rear formation movement, that spoiled their chances. "F" Armoury is a model of neatness, and had many visitors during the evening. "A," "B," and "C" Companies had many recruits in their ranks, and this, of course, diminished their chances considerably. The result of the competition is as follows:—

	A.	B.	C.	D.	E.	F.	G.	H.
Armouries, arms and accoutrements. Full marks (100).....	75	82	80	85	50	90	60	65
Attendance at class firing. (150).....	105	87	100	108	69	75	59	72
Attendance at authorized drill. (250).....	120	140	134	129	106	149	81	104
Company drill competition. (500).....	342	388	381	413	—	408	—	299
Total (full marks 1,000).....	642	687	695	735	225	722	200	540

## PRIZE WINNERS.

1st D Company, 735 marks, prize... \$40	3rd C Company, 695 marks, prize... \$20
2nd F " 722 " " ... 30	4th B " 687 " " ... 10

I was dining the other night at the officers' mess at the Tower, and was privileged to witness a scene not included in the programme of an ordinary visit to the Tower. It was the dramatic and picturesque business of the sentry on guard challenging the Chief Warder who was carrying the keys of the tower to the Governor. This happens every night as the clock strikes eleven, and has happened every night at the same hour back to the days of the Plantagenets. The scene takes place before the gate of the Bloody Tower, immediately facing the Traitor's Gate, through which Sir Thomas More marched on his way back to the condemned cell, the reversed axe carried before him being the sign of his sentence. From a little portico on the right hand side of the Bloody Tower the sentry turns out, and stands on guard. From the Traitor's Gate there presently appear two or three men, one dressed in a scarlet robe and carrying a lighted lantern. The sentry, bringing his rifle with a sharp click to his shoulder, calls out "Halt! Who goes there?" The man in the scarlet gown answers "The keys." "Whose keys?" says the stern sentry. "Queen Victoria's keys." "Pass Queen Victoria's keys," says the mollified sentry, and the warder moves on a pace, then halts, and, holding up the lantern, cries aloud "God bless Queen Victoria!" The sentry presents arms, the men with the Chief Warder chant "Amen" three times, and the warder resumes his journey, carrying the keys to the Governor of the Tower. About this time all the theatres in London are reaching, or have passed, the climax of their dramatic pieces. But there is nothing in London, probably nothing in the world, so finely dramatic as this relic of old English history, played here night after night, with only the grim walls of the Tower looking on. Centuries ago this very gateway heard the same challenge, "Whose keys?" Only the answer was, "King Stephen's keys," or "Henry the Third's keys," or "Edward the Second's keys," down to Elizabeth, and through the dreary mediocrity of the Georges.—*Exchange*.