

THE CANADIAN MILITIA GAZETTE

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No. 9, of 11th July, 1890.

MISCELLANEOUS.

Topics of the Week.

Another class has graduated from the Royal Military College, and four young men whose graduating honours give evidence of more than ordinary ability and application have accepted the Imperial commissions placed at their disposal. The names appear in the Militia General Orders published in this issue. It will be noticed that the Cavalry commission, of which the graduates as a rule fight shy, has this year been accepted. The other branches of the service have always been more popular, no doubt the extra expense connected with the Cavalry service having a deterrent effect on young men of moderate means. Already some fifty cadets from our Royal Military College have joined the Imperial Army, and but one report is received of them: that they are model soldiers, a credit alike to the Collège and to the Army.

Of thirty candidates who presented themselves for examination for admission to the College at the commencement of next term, sixteen succeeded in passing. The maximum number allowed to enter in any one year is twenty-four, but until the increased accommodation asked for is furnished, the College authorities will be well pleased to see the number of successful candidates fall short of the maximum. To pass, a boy must have had a good elementary education, especially in mathematics, and if any not well grounded slip through by chance they are apt to remain only till the next examination of the class, when the inevitable failure occurs.

Last year a new avenue to the Imperial service was opened to Canadians, and will be found useful by those with military aspirations who have not found it feasible to take the Military College course, or perhaps have not thought of doing so until past the age for admission to that institution. This consists of an offer of six commissions annually to young officers of the Canadian Militia, who have had a moderate amount of training and are able to pass the examinations prescribed. Two candidates—Lieut. J. C. De Wolfe, of the Halifax Garrison Artillery, and Lieut. T. E. Howell, of the 1st P.W.R., Montreal—have recently taken the literary examination prescribed, and their papers have been transmitted to England, whence the questions put to the candidates were sent. If successful, they will then have to undergo the military examination.

The steady flow of the best young men of Canada to join the Imperial Army, will in time serve to meet the demand that a Canadian officer shall be appointed to the command of the militia, without the necessity of abandoning the present wise requirement that the command shall only be given to an officer holding rank not below that of Colonel in Her Majesty's regular army. An officer whose service has been only in the Canadian militia cannot have that practical knowledge of warfare which it is desirable the commanding officer of the militia should possess; and even one who has in his youth passed through the Army is at the disadvantage of having lost touch, so rapid has been the progress of military science. For the purposes of the Canadian militia, an officer fresh from active work at the head centres of military learning is the proper person for the command. The newspapers have had a good deal to say about the appointing power, and several have announced, with an air of acute discernment, that though the Dominion government may fancy they can appoint whom they please this is quite a mistake, as by the B.N.A. act the command of the militia was vested in Her Majesty, who therefore, they foolishly argue, may make the appointment without consultation with the Dominion government. They overlook the fact that Her Majesty has handed over this authority to the constitutional representatives in Canada, just as unreservedly as she has handed over the authority to levy taxation in this country; and it is in the power of Parliament, should it so choose, to repeal the clause of the militia act restricting the command to Army officers, and thus leave the Government free to make any appointment desired.

Having so persistently advocated an increase in the Government allowance of ammunition to the Militia, it is with pleasure we note that by General Order just issued that allowance has been doubled, being now forty rounds annually to city corps, in place of twenty; and twenty rounds annually to rural corps, in place of that number only every second year, when the corps were ordered to camp. It does not seem to be the intention at present to put any restriction upon the manner of expending this extra allowance, except that the officer commanding the district is to be satisfied that the ammunition is used by each man for whom it is drawn. Should the discretionary power thus left to commanding officers be found to be abused, no doubt stringent departmental regulations will be enacted. This increased issue is but a step in the right direction. The rural corps need as much practice as those of the cities, and as they could in nearly every instance give the time to properly expend forty rounds, it is to be hoped that the next concession will be to give them "equal rights." Then a further increase all round may be asked for. But in the meantime the militiamen should be grateful for what they have got, and give due credit to the Minister of Militia for having so readily acceded to the representations of the Adjutant-General through which this commendable increase has been effected.

To double the issue of ammunition as indicated above will entail an annual expense of only about eight thousand dollars, that small sum representing the cost of the ammunition annually served out in the past.