



FATAL ACCIDENT AT NIAGARA.

Editor MILITARY GAZETTE:

SIR,—The killing of Pte. Hatton at Niagara Camp shows that warning should at once be given to riflemen using the modern rifle at target practice. The danger is that it may be taken for granted that butts that are safe for Snider or Martini rifles are safe for the new Lee-Enfield. The greater penetration of the latter needs twice as much earth or whatever material is used to protect the markers. Some way of bringing these facts to the notice of every rifle association and commanding officer should be devised. Could you not put up a danger flag of some kind in the columns of your paper?

Yours respectfully,

JOHN CROWE.

Guelph, Sept. 18, 1896.

THE TRAINING OF OUR RURAL MILITIA.

Editor MILITARY GAZETTE:

SIR,—It is generally admitted by military men who have visited our camps of instruction that the present system of training our rural militia is very bad, and that the 12 days' training which men undergo every two years is to all intents and purposes useless. The idea of forming camps of instruction and of keeping men under canvass for 12 days is in itself sound, and a great deal could no doubt be accomplished in that time, if only the officers and N.C.O.'s were qualified to impart instruction to their men, but, unfortunately, such is not the case, and it could not be otherwise with the present system, for it is manifestly absurd to suppose that any officer or N.C.O., even if he were originally qualified to act as such, could remain efficient with 12 days' training every two years. The result is that camps of instruction are now looked upon by the great majority of those who attend them merely as a pleasant outing and an easy way of earning a few dollars.

It is much to be regretted that the splendid material of which our rural battalions are composed is not better utilized, and that the

amount voted by Parliament is not more profitably employed. The question naturally arises as to whether the existing system could not be improved. I submit that it is possible to do so without additional cost to the public, and I would offer the following suggestions which may perhaps be deemed worthy of consideration. My proposal is that the rural battalions should be formed into regiments, four battalions forming one regiment, with a strength of six or eight companies of 168 men each, but with only three officers per company and the usual complement of staff officers—such regiments to be trained annually in the following manner, viz.: The officers and N.C.O.'s for 24 days and half the regiment for 12 days, the men being called out by sections of companies, that is 42 men at a time from each company, for periods of 12 days each. The advantage of training the officers and N.C.O.'s longer than the men is obvious, for it is evident that no possible good can result from the camps of instruction unless the officers and N.C.O.'s are competent to impart instruction to their men.

Moreover, with a smaller complement of officers and N.C.O.'s it would be far easier to insist that they should qualify themselves to act as such, and it would also effect a considerable saving in the allowances at present paid to incompetent officers. This saving would meet the extra expenditure entailed in having a larger number of attached officers in our permanent schools.

I venture to say that were this system adopted and properly supervised by an efficient staff of energetic permanent corps officers under our able district commanding officers, the camps of instruction would soon present a very different appearance to what they do at present.

P. H. DU P. CASGRAIN,

Captain R. C.

St. James' Club, Montreal, Sept. 22, 1896.

THE GRENADIERS' RECORD.

Editor MILITARY GAZETTE:

SIR,—In your last issue, in the D.R.A. reports, you comment on the fact that the 48th stood first, adding the Gzowski and Shield figures together. This puzzled me on seeing it, as I knew the Royal Grenadiers were first in the Shield and third in the Gzowski, and, on looking further, I found you had credited us with 602 instead of 702, which places us at the top of the list. I would be

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