

THE CANADIAN MILITIA GAZETTE

The Popular Organ of the Active Force of the Dominion.

VOL. VI. No 51.
Price Five Cents.

OTTAWA, DECEMBER 31st, 1891.

\$2.00 a Year.
\$1.50 in advance.

GENERAL HERBERT'S IMPRESSIONS.

The first annual report by Major General Herbert upon the condition of the force, as seen by him in his inspection tour, forms part of the last Militia General Orders. This is an interesting new departure, as such reports have hitherto been reserved for embodiment in the annual report of the Militia Department, thus not only appearing much later but having a more limited circulation. General Herbert's criticisms are very much to the point, and ought to be productive of good results. We give here that part of the General Order in full:--

No. 3. MILITIA TRAINING 1891.

The following remarks of the Major General Commanding on the results of the Militia training for the year 1891 are published for information of all concerned.

I.—DRILL OF CITY BATTALIONS.

Several corps have attained a fair amount of precision in battalion movements. It is noticeable, however, throughout that the drill of the Company individually, as a company or as a squad, has been neglected. This is sufficiently evident when the companies take part in evolutions in close formation but it is still more patent when they are called upon to act in extended formation, and to take part in tactical manoeuvres. It is then seen that the significance of the Company, as a tactical unit, is not sufficiently appreciated, and still less so that of the minor units, half companies and sections.

Similarly, commanding officers fail to appreciate the significance of the half-battalion, and its use in manoeuvres. Section 15, Part 8, Infantry Drill, "The Attack, Battalion," shows the importance, of getting the Majors accustomed to handle these subdivisions of the Battalion under the direction of the Commanding officer.

There is a strong disposition in Commanding Officers, to give too much attention to a few of the more showy evolutions contained in the Drill Book, which have comparatively little tactical importance.

Considering the small amount of time at the disposal of battalions for drill, they would do well to limit the instruction to the sections laid down in General Order (13), 17th July 1891, and the numerous combinations that can be formed thereon.

The simpler and more necessary evolutions, when combining accuracy in the direction, with rapidity in the movement, (to the extent of dispensing with points for formation) give a higher test of drill than an indifferent performance of all the more complicated evolutions in the Drill Book.

Marches through the streets occupy much of the time of the City Corps. Sufficient use does not appear to be made of those marches for purpose of instruction. They are generally conducted solely "in fours," without any of the variations of formation admissible on the line of march.

There are few places where some of the principles laid down for Route marching (Infantry Drill, Part 5, 2) cannot be practised. The formation of the column of route into

column of sections, and half companies, and occasionally even into company column, or still wider formation is desirable. The employment of advance or rear guards would further materially assist in the military instruction and add to the interest of such marches.

The weakness of companies seriously hampers a commanding officer in his work of instruction. It is impossible to drill well, with so-called companies, which do not represent that tactical unit; therefore for drill, administrative companies must be combined, as prescribed in Section 1, Part 8, Infantry Drill (Battalion), so as to form tactical units.

II.—CORPS TRAINED IN CAMPS.

(1.) *Assembly of Corps.* The season at which the camps were held this year, interfering somewhat with the occupation of the men, accounts for small musters in some cases. At the same time much longer notice was given by General Orders than has been customary in former years. If therefore Commanding Officers had accepted those General Orders as final, and had acted upon them, it would have enabled many men to turn out who did not do so.

By General Order (16) of 21st August 1891, Quarter Masters were instructed to report themselves in camp a day before the assembly of the corps, extra pay and allowances being authorized for this purpose. This order was disregarded in very many cases. The most important duties of the Quarter Masters are those at the opening of camp, and upon their proper performance depends much of the comfort of the men. Disregard of such orders will in future be interpreted as evidence of want of care for the men and will be dealt with accordingly.

(2.) *Personnel of Corps.* As is unavoidable in Rural Corps, the percentage of recruits was very high. The physique however of the men was very good. In the 31st (Grey) Battalion the physique was splendid, and the same term may generally be applied to the physique of the Cavalry corps. In many corps such as the 20th, 30th, 33rd, 42nd, 50th, 68th, and 75th, the physique was evenly good throughout, while in others there was considerable mixture of boys under age, old men and others physically unfit. These had almost invariably been taken to fill up companies to the authorized quota, regardless of the injury thus done to the corps, and of the useless expenditure entailed on the Government.

(3.) *Horses.* The class of horse generally throughout the Cavalry was poor, and could not be accepted as representing the best horses that the men were capable of bringing out. In many cases horses were evidently hired at a low rate for the purpose of earning the Government grant of a dollar a day, their intrinsic value being very small. The rejection of such horses should be the first duty of officers commanding troops and regiments. Many cases were however noted of Non-Commissioned Officers and Troopers riding really valuable horses.

(4.) *Drill.* The result obtained by systematic drill, on the principles laid down this year, were generally satisfactory. This was due to the earnestness with which all ranks work