

# THE CANADIAN MILITIA GAZETTE

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## Topics of the Week.

The oft discussed subject of dress at military rifle meetings is brought up again this week by a correspondent, "Mark IV." The Captain he refers to was seemingly something of a beau, for whom his handsome uniform was too plain; and the same spirit which prompted him to add the collar and tie by way of embellishment, no doubt made him loath to allow the rain to mar its original beauty, and hence the addition of the umbrella to his equipment, in default of the regulation waterproof cloak. We agree with our correspondent that no additional frillings such as he mentions should be countenanced on the rifle range. The more pronounced the simplicity of uniform called for, the easier will it be to enforce compliance with the rules. Care should be taken, however, not to harass the riflemen by absurd constructions of the regulations. An instance of this kind happened at a recent prize meeting, where a range officer compelled a competitor who wore one of the old fashioned serges with belt of the same material attached, to put on over it the pipe-clayed belt worn with his tunic. It was in vain the rifleman protested that if he were allowed to wear the serge at all, the belt attached to it was all that the dress regulations called for. The range officer was obdurate, and the competitor had to leave the butt, where he was about to commence his score, and skirmish about for the loan of a white belt.

A bill providing a pension system for the militia district staff officers and the members of the permanent corps is not unlikely to be introduced at the pending session of parliament, the subject having received considerable attention during the recess. The necessity for such a measure has long been obvious, and we have never lost a seasonable opportunity of calling public attention to the matter. While the details of the proposed measure are yet only matters of speculation, we would not be surprised to find the new pension bill modelled as closely as possible after that parliament so readily adopted last year for the benefit of the Mounted Police.

On several occasions moneys have been voted for extensions and additions to the Royal Military College buildings, and the grants allowed to lapse for one reason or another, roughly speaking because the work was not an immediate necessity, and its initiation was put off until the lapse of time killed the vote. Parliament having thus assented to this contemplated expenditure, there should be no objection raised if at the approaching session it is found desirable to ask for a re-vote of these appropriations. The time has now come when the College must be provided with greater living accommodation for its pupils, or the limit

of attendance be further decreased. It would be a great pity to exclude any properly qualified young men bent upon acquiring the education which this institution affords.

We have to make a further acknowledgment of holiday greetings received, this time from No. 6 company of the Victoria Rifles, Montreal, whose card contains a picture of the regimental armoury building, and a well executed photograph of the company as it was made up in the early part of the year.

The first to answer the circular issued by the Secretary of the Canadian Military Rifle League were Lt.-Col. J. R. Wilkinson, 21st Fusiliers, headquarters at Leamington, Ont., and Lt.-Col. R. H. Davis, 37th Batt., headquarters at York, Ont. Both say they are much in favour of the scheme, and promise their hearty support.

Members of our ambulance and hospital corps will be interested in hearing that in the United States a bill has been introduced to increase the pay of the hospital corps in connection with the army, and that it has good prospects of becoming law. Surgeon General Moore has taken an active part in the matter. He says: "The pay of privates of the hospital corps as now fixed by law is much less than that heretofore given to enlisted men who were detailed on extra duty for the performance of this service and is not commensurate with the duties required of them. This has produced dissatisfaction and discontent among the men and has already impaired the efficiency of the corps. The duties which these men are called to perform are often exceedingly trying and dangerous; they are frequently required to lose rest in attendance at night upon patients who are dangerously ill with fevers or wounds; also to expose themselves to the contagion of diseases, as small-pox, erysipelas, measles, etc., and to perform other duties about the persons of the helpless sick which are often offensive and highly disagreeable. In addition to this strictly professional service, they are required to attend drills and lectures for instruction in the transportation of sick and wounded, and in rendering to them first aid in emergencies. The soldier of the line has certain fixed times for the performance of his duties, and if called upon for a service not strictly military, is paid for it at the rate of 35 or 50 cents per day, while the soldier of the hospital corps is continuously on duty, and has no special opportunity for recreation or for bettering his financial condition by outside work." It must be confessed that Canada has scarcely any hospital corps, but a glance at the militia list will show that we have a Surgeon General, who might interest himself in providing inducements for the growth of such a corps.

A fuss is being raised in England just now over frauds discovered to have been systematically made in the efficiency returns furnished to the government by Volunteer battalions, the records being falsified in order to obtain a larger grant than the corps were properly entitled to. Non-efficient members have been returned as efficient by falsification of the target practice returns. The Duke of Cambridge reminds commanding officers and adjutants that the making up of target practice registers in the office is not permissible under any circumstances; they must be