

CORRESPONDENCE.

"A PERMANENT CORPS GRIEVANCE."

To the Editor of the Canadian Militia Gazette:

SIR,—I read with much sympathy and satisfaction "Cloudy's" letter on this subject in your last issue.

He writes as one interested directly, and as such his views may not have the weight they deserve. For that reason I, being entirely unconnected with the permanent corps, desire to express my concurrence in them. I have had many opportunities of observing the working of one of the "schools" and I can bear testimony to the thorough zeal and efficiency of the staff, and have long thought that the rule which places them on the same footing on active service with those whom they are appointed to instruct a most unfair if not an absurd one. It seems to me, and will to all considerate officers of the militia, a reasonable proposition that the officers of our small quasi-regular force should rank a step higher than those of our non-professional militia. For instance, a lieutenant should rank as captain, a captain as major, a major as lieutenant-colonel, and a lieutenant-colonel as colonel, with pay and allowances commensurate with such increased rank. It is manifestly unfair to base the rate of pay on the scale laid down for officers of the Imperial army under the system which at present obtains in these schools. Their labors are far in excess of those which Imperial officers are called on to perform. They have far more regimental work in proportion, and responsibility, and in addition have to perform onerous instructional duties, for undertaking which an officer of the Imperial service would be relieved from all other duties; and we cannot expect to get, in this country, men who combine the necessary zeal and efficiency with that possession of private means which would make the possessor financially independent. Then, as "Cloudy" very wisely remarks, outside of the headquarters staff, there is no retiring allowance in prospect. It cannot reasonably be expected that the present zeal will continue unless something be done. The sacrifice involved under the present system is too great. The remuneration is utterly inadequate for the services rendered, and especially if, as appears now to be the case with the militia authorities, the experienced officers at present holding commissions in these schools are to be quietly ignored in the establishment of new corps.

I need not point out how greatly the utility and influence of these schools depends on the efficiency and thoroughness of the work of instruction done by their staff. The perfunctory and half-hearted performance of duty in the instruction of the attached will render them valueless for their great purpose of worthily inspiring and elevating the militia, while they will infuse rather a spirit of routine and mechanical performance of duty. Certainly soldierly spirit, enthusiasm and devotion must gradually, if not rapidly, sink under the present unjust system.

It becomes the more incumbent upon the authorities to give serious consideration and a prompt remedy to this state of things, inasmuch as the officers of permanent corps are forbidden by the Queen's regulations to make their views or grievances public. The public, and even Parliament, are therefore not informed where the shoe pinches them. An officer in the Imperial service may sit in Parliament and guard the interests of his brothers-in-arms and enlighten public sentiment, which would demand that simple justice and fair play should prevail, and the important interests of the militia and country would be fully protected.

OFFICER OF MILITIA.

REGIMENTAL NOTES.

(We wish to publish information respecting all the doings of all corps. Will the officers interested, particularly at a distance, assist us by having news relating to their corps promptly forwarded?)

C SCHOOL OF GUNNERY.—Instructions have been received by Col. Holmes to open a school of gunnery at Victoria, commencing on the 15th of March, provided a sufficient number of candidates present themselves. The course will last for three months, and will be open to non-qualified officers, non-commissioned officers and men of all corps of active militia in this district. The class will be limited to ten officers and twenty non-commissioned officers and men, between the ages of 18 and 45, not less than 5 feet 6 inches in height and 35 inches around the chest. The hours of drill will be about four and a half daily, except on Sundays and holidays, and will terminate at 12 o'clock, m.—*Colonist*.

TORONTO.—Great dissatisfaction is expressed by the volunteers in this district at the prospect of C School being closed. It is, we hear, over full at present; there being 19 officers and 42 n.c.o.s and men attached, and already there are more applications for admission than can be attached during 12 months with the present accommodation, although not one half of the officers in the Province have yet applied who desire to go through a course this year. The unanimous feeling is that instead of taking the schools away it would be far more economical for the service to enlist a provisional battalion, such as was raised in 1870, of well drilled men. There are plenty of them idle in the Province.—*Com.*

27TH BATT.—Capt. Ellis' company met for drill on Wednesday evening last. There are some vacancies in the ranks which the officers would like to see filled, as the company will be called out for camp service this year. The drill will be continued every Wednesday evening.—*Sarnia Observer*.

3RD BATTALION.—A special meeting of the Victoria Rifles was held the other evening at their armory to take into consideration the advisability of building an armory at the west end, the advisability of which we referred to some weeks since. The feeling is very strong that having to go to the east end to reach the new armories would seriously interfere with the attendance, for which reason the battalion feel the necessity of taking some action to maintain the reputation of the corps for proficiency. Provided satisfactory arrangements can be made with the government the corps and its friends are prepared to put up the necessary buildings.

G. G. FOOT GUARDS.—A lately adopted regimental winter uniform for the officers was first worn by those on the guard of honor at the opening of Parliament, and looked exceedingly rich. It consists of a wedge-shaped cap of gray Persian lamb, with a blue bag edged with gold falling over on the right side, a close-fitting gray cloth overcoat with fur collar and fur gauntlets to match the cap. Captain Toller commanded the guard at the opening and Major Todd at the drawing-room. Both guards were, as usual, all that could be desired.

AMUSEMENTS.

(If the active organizers of regimental games, company clubs, and similar winter occupations for the militia will forward us accounts of their doings we will gladly publish them. This, we hope, will have the good result of encouraging the organization of similar clubs where there are none at present.)

Q.O.R.—The annual smoking party of I Company was held at 46 King street east on the 25th. There was a good attendance and a very pleasant evening was spent, the utmost good-feeling prevailing throughout. Capt. J. A. Murray presided, supported by Lieuts. Ross and Morphy. An excellent programme of vocal and instrumental music was thoroughly enjoyed, Prof. Bohner presiding at the piano. Interesting addresses were delivered by the officers and Sergt. Crean, the company being reported to be in an excellent condition in point of numbers and finances. The probabilities of a trip to England next year formed a topic of conversation during the evening, the boys receiving the idea with enthusiasm.

PORT ARTHUR.—The concert on the 16th February in aid of the Rifles was a most successful affair, the town hall being filled till standing-room was at a premium, and about \$150 being realized. The stage was appropriately decorated, but the initials of the corps fastened over the stage gave the inevitable punster an opportunity for the undeserved remark that the whole performance was below P.A.R. The opening number was "The maple leaf our emblem dear," sung by Captain Ray, with the chorus by the Rifles. Several amateurs contributed songs, chiefly martial in theme, the company itself developing a large amount of vocal talent. "The red white and blue" by the Misses Gough, with manual exercise with toy rifles between the verses, and "The young recruit," by Miss Murdoch, with "The Port Arthur Volunteers," a special composition, as an encore, deserve special mention. Between songs the Rifle Company were put through the manual, firing and bayonet exercises, gaining great praise by the precision of their movements.

The third part of the programme consisted of camp scenes including songs from Capt. Ray, Privates Hanby, Ashforth and Davidson, recitations by Sergt. Hodder, dances, &c., concluding with a magnificent tableau, in which the company was represented in the act of preparing for cavalry.

ROYAL GRENADIERS.—The officers held their usual monthly mess dinner on Thursday last, when they had a big guest night, and spent an enjoyable and sociable evening.

The table was very prettily decorated, and the catering reflected great credit upon the mess committee, especially as we hear that whilst everything was provided that could be desired their economy showed most satisfactory results.

One of the officers having presented a piano to their mess rooms they were able to avail themselves of the musical talent in the mess.

QUEBEC.—On Tuesday 23rd February, the annual drive of the staff-sergeants and sergeants of the permanent corps stationed in the citadel, Quebec, took place. The day was simply perfect; clear, bright, sunny, with that champagne-y crisp cold that exhilarates the nerves, and makes life itself a pleasure, of which we seem to have the special monopoly in "this Canada of ours." On the "Turn Out" sounding, over twenty teams fell in for the grand promenade round the citadel square, headed by Sergeant Majors Baxter and Lyndon of the cavalry and artillery schools stationed here. In the leading sleigh too, was the genial manager and purse bearer of the drive committee, Staff-Sergt. Dingley, C. S. Corps, to whose unremitting care and attention most of the success of this most pleasant outing was due. Behind, mixed in sociable confusion of artillery, cavalry and infantry uniforms, drove the members of the Garrison Sergeants' Mess, B. Battery, Cavalry School Corps, and the 87th Batt., now doing garrison duty in the citadel. Many civilians, old comrades and friends, were scattered about among the different teams. At 11 o'clock the cavalcade filed out of the citadel gate, and after making a tour of the principal streets of the city crossed the St. Charles river for the Falls of Montmorency, their destination. After a pleasant drive through the village of Beauport and along the banks of the St. Lawrence, "smiling and glistening in her white robes under the winter sun," the hotel was reached, and after a left-about wheel and left take ground, which brought the teams into line in the stable yard with military precision, the "halt" and "unhook" were sounded. In five minutes the horses were stabled in the comfortable sheds of mine host Bureau, rubbed down and fed, and the whole company adjourned to the hotel parlor, where the time passed pleasantly in singing old English and French military songs, Sergt. Hamel, C.S.C., presiding most efficiently at the piano. At one o'clock the "dinner call" brought the hungry visitors to the dining-room, where a most appetizing cold collation, to be washed down by sundry hampers of liquids, temperance and otherwise, had been provided by the energetic committee. The luncheon reflected credit on the purveyor, Mr. R. Whitefield of St. John street, to whom its preparation had been a labor of love, but who was unfortunately prevented from being present. After dinner, the room was cleared and the time passed pleasantly visiting the falls and neighborhood or sliding down "mine host's" new slides. Here the championship (amateur) was awarded to a gallant artilleryman for the resolute way in which he fell off the slide, off the traineau, off anything there was to fall off, and the heroic manner in which he tried to "ram" every snow-bank in his way. The infantry were awarded the palm for professional sliding. At 4 p.m. the dinner call brought all hands to a freshly-supplied table. The company had been largely increased by friends, who drove out from town in the afternoon; and the table, though liberally supplied, began to show signs of giving in, to the honor of our hospitable manager. However, the attack was "knocked out in the second round, and the manager came up smiling" with coffee and cigars. These disposed of, "boot and saddle" was sounded, and the hotel yard again became a scene of plunging horses, walking harness and robes, and tightening up of girths. The return was varied by one or two upsets in friendly snow-banks with no damage done, and by 8 o'clock the whole party had adjourned to the sergeant's mess. Here a vote of thanks to the members of the mess for a most pleasant and enjoyable day was proposed on behalf of his civilian friends by W. Lamb and carried, and suitably acknowledged on behalf of the military element by the Master Gunner R. S. A. The piano was again manned and an evening of music and song closed a very pleasant day. The thanks of the committee are especially due to Lt.-Col. Montizambert, Commandant Citadel, Lt.-Col. Turnbull, Commanding C. S. C., and the officers belonging to, and attached to the artillery and cavalry schools for the loan of sleighs, robes, harness, private horses: in fact whatever was asked for. It is to be hoped that the usual drive may be continued as it affords a pleasant and healthy day, and tends greatly to strengthen the true spirit of good fellowship and "camaraderie" among the different corps. SAMAGAMS.