

# THE CANADIAN MILITIA GAZETTE

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## Topics of the Week.

A friend writing from Montreal anent our report of the review held there on the Queen's Birthday takes exception to the strictures upon the appearance of the Prince of Wales Rifles. "I think it is unfair," he says, "to say that there was any appearance of slovenliness in either the marching or appearance of the men, unless you can call the fact of their being the only rifle corps on the ground in the rifle green helmet a reason for applying that epithet to them." No doubt our correspondent here accounts for a good part of the apparent shortcomings of the Prince of Wales Rifles at the review. That corps has not the advantages or opportunities for drill enjoyed by the Queen's Own or the Victoria Rifles, and these having superior equipment they could not fail to better please the popular eye. But the Prince of Wales Rifles are also about to discard the dark headwear, providing themselves with the white helmets now generally worn, so that they will be able to make a more showy appearance when next before the public. This will be at their inspection on the 29th. Dominion Day they will spend in Kingston, and the officers are reported to be working hard to have the corps sustain in that essentially military city the good reputation for drill and discipline it has long borne. It will be remembered that Lt.-Col. T. P. Butler took over the command in April last, and the transfer caused the annual drill to be commenced late in the season. If excuses are needed for anything in the Queen's Birthday parade of the regiment, there are plenty available, but those who know Col. Butler and his officers will be confident that ere inspection day the 1st P. W. R. will be in a position to challenge comparison with any corps.

A London correspondent thus writes of things musical:—There is much talk now of thoroughly reorganizing "military music" in the English army. It is said that there is no such thing as an eminent army composer or any military music deserving the title of famous. At present the officers of regiments mainly keep up their bands at their own expense. All that the Government does is to make an annual allowance of £80 a year to each band, and to supply trumpets to the cavalry, and bugles, drums and fifes to the infantry. It furnishes these particular instruments, because it is those who play upon them who accompany the regiments in active service, and actually figure with them in the field. The remainder of the band (it not may be generally known) act as stretcher bearers and are otherwise employed under the medical staff. The critics who do not think highly of our military music must admit that there

is plenty of it and remember that the use of certain old airs by certain regiments has history and tradition on its side. The band of the 12th Lancers plays five special melodies every night between "watch setting" and "lights out," and has done so as far back as the longest memory goeth. "The girl I left behind me," became the farewell march of the army after the noted Brighton camp. So now the old regiments and their officers think that although there is no purely distinctive military music in this country it is surely well that favourite airs should endear themselves spontaneously to the regiments which adopt them, and as these have always proved thrilling and inspiring, finer musical efforts can be dispensed with.

Some time ago we saw reproduced in a number of Canadian papers severe commentaries on the management of our Militia Department, based upon letters written to the English service papers and dated from Canada. We have good reason for believing that certain of these letters, so dated, were written in London, England. It is surprising that the *Broad Arrow*, which published and commented on one of these, had such unbounded faith in the honesty of the statements contained in a letter dishonestly dated, and with even a dishonest *nom de plume*, for if information recently received be correct, the author of the infamous letter signed "Canadian," and attacking our Minister of Militia because of his French-Canadian origin, was no Canadian at all, but a British officer who had been disappointed in certain expectations in Canada.

## The Pacific Coast Defences.

It has time and again been stated that negotiations of a confidential nature are in progress between the Dominion and Imperial Governments respecting the defence works and garrison of British Columbia, but no particulars were forthcoming until in the House of Lords on the 16th ultimo Lord Sudley asked the Secretary of State for the Colonies, "Whether the Dominion Government had assented to the proposed arrangement for the defence of Esquimalt, whether the contemplated works had been commenced, and the armament sent out; whether the government would state the date when the fortifications at Esquimalt would be completed and the guns placed in position." In reply Lord Elphinstone made a statement of which the following is a condensed summary: In the agreement with the Canadian Government it was stipulated that while the Imperial Government were prepared to find armament, ammunition and submarine stores, the Dominion Government on their part were to provide the permanent garrison and training instructors capable of instructing the artillery and submarine miners who would form part of the local force. On further consideration, it appeared that the Dominion Government would probably find very great difficulty and certainly very great expense, were they to be called upon to provide the artillery men, submarine miners and officers capable of instructing the local force, and it had therefore been decided that a force of seventy-five Royal Marine Artillery were to be offered to the Dominion Government, including three officers. Fifty of these men would act as artillery