GOSSIP OF THE MILITIA.

An Interesting Review of our Army Medical Department.

Annual Meeting of the Dufferin Rifles Rifle Association-Events at the Montreal Infantry School-Guards' Non-coms. at Mess. Miscellaneous Items.

RIFLE Association has been formed in the Island of Cape Breton. The Dis-A trict Staff is giving it every encouragement. The following compose the council: Major Hill, 94th; Major McLeod, S.F.B.; Capt. Crow, S.F.B.; Lieut. Gillis, 94th, and John E. Buchill, Esq.

The non-coms. of No. 1 Co. of the Guards had a grand spread at Spencer's restaurant on Saturday evening last, the occasion being the regular monthly mess dinner. Col. Sergt. H. N. Chesley presided, and the members were present in full force. Col.-Sergt. Ed. Taylor of No. 5, formerly a n.c.o. of No. 1, and Lance-Corpl. Grout, who has just had his first stripe conferred upon him, were initiated into the membership. Several guests were present, including the officers of the company, Major Todd and Lieuts. Thompson and Winter, and several civilians, formerly members.

Montreal.

WITH the approach of spring comes the awakening of the different city corps which have been hybernating more or less for the last few months. Notices of meetings or drills make an almost daily appearance in the papers, and towards the usual hour of 8 p.m. the smart uniforms of men making their way to their respective armouries are hailed as the infallible signs of spring. The rifle associations are also holding their annual meetings to make arrangements for the campaign of 1888. At the Vics' armoury the second competition for Lieut. Col. Henshaw's gold medal was shot on Saturday last and was won by Pte. Geo. Cooke, with 66 points -5 shots each at 200, 500 and 600 yards.

Winnipeg.

N the 15th inst., Major Coutlee, commanding Winnipeg Field Battery, gave a very instructive and interesting lecture on Artillery in the Recreation Room of Mounted Infantry School, placed at his disposal for the occasion. Lieut. Colonel Taylor took the chair and introduced the lecturer. The lecture, although to a large extent a technical one, was so clear as to be easily understood by all branches of the service. It was attended by all the officers and many of the men of the Mounted Infantry, as well as by the members of the Winnipeg Field Battery.

A VICIOUS BRONCHO.

One of the horses of the Mounted Infantry, when in the blacksmith's shop last week, came very near making an end of Farrier-Sergeant Smith. It appears the horse had got caught in the halter rope and the farrier went up to him and cut the rope. No sooner had he done this than the horse "made for him," standing on his hind legs and striking at him viciously with his fore feet (after the usual custom of bronchos). He got the farrier in a corner and hit him twice on the head, once very severely, tearing the scalp, and when the farrier held up his hand to protect his head the horse struck his hand, tearing it badly, and then struck him badly on the arm. Luckily the fur cap protected his head or he would have been killed. The horse drove everyone out, and the door being shut on him, he then went round the shop striking the sides violently with his fore feet, trying to break out. It was some time before he could be quited. The horse, though high-spirited, was considered to be fairly quiet—but

Western people say you can never trust a broncho.

The Mounted Infantry have had mounted parade and ride out for exercise for two hours every day this winter (except during three or four blizzards). They have no fur coats like the Mounted Police, but have warm fur helmet-shaped caps, fur collars and gauntlets, and though the thermometer has been often from 20 to 30 below zero, very few have been frost bitten out riding—none indeed as bad as two of the sentries in barracks, one of whom has lost one of his fingers.

Brantford.

HE tenth annual meeting of the Dufferin Rifles' Rifle Association was held at Brantford on Thursday 15th inst., there being present Major Rothwell, Major T. H. Jones, Capt. H. J. McGlashan, Capt. H. Leonard, Capt. W. D. Jones, Capt. J. S. Hamilton, Capt. W. A. Wilkes, Lieut. A. E. Christie, Lieut. E. Park, Lieut. M. J. Ince, Lieut. W. G. Kilmaster, Lieut. J. W. Howarth, Sergt. Jas. Thompson, Pte. A. McKay, Mr. D. S. Henderson and others.

The secretary, Lieut. M. J. Ince, presented an exceedingly interesting report, reviewing in detail the operations of the year. Included in this is a paragraph expressing the regret felt by the council that a large number of the members of the regiment do not avail themselves of the advantages of weekly target practice, nor turn out in such large numbers at the annual rifle matches as is desirable. No regiment, they point out, is considered thoroughly efficient unless it is known as a good shooting regiment, and efficiency with the rifle can only be attained by constant practice. To meet objections of a good many the prize meeting is held one day instead of two as formerly, and the regimental match for several years has been so arranged that only half a day need be taken up by those who cannot spare a whole day from business. To give more encouragement to the men of the regiment the officers have refused to accept prizes in this match. The council hopes that representative teams will this year be sent to the Ontario Rifle Association matches and the Dominion Rifle Association matches, and with that end in view steady practice will be undertaken during the spring and summer months.

The treasurer's report showed a balance on hand of \$38, an increase of \$10 during the year. Votes of thanks were then passed to Major Rothwell, treasurer, and

Lieut. Ince, secretary, for their services.

It was decided to commence the regular target practice on the 2nd of June and continue it until the annual matches, the practice days to be each alternate Wednesday and Saturday.

Wednesday, the 19th September, was the day suggested for the annual matches. The Association will this year affiliate with the Ontario Rifle Association and also with the Dominion Rifle Association, and hopes to send representatives to the matches

Toronto.

EMO for Driving Band: You say in your last letter that Canada boasts of six 40-pr. B.L.R. and ten 7-in. B.L.R. guns. I cannot make out how you arrive at this. The Stores' Return gives us four 40-prs. and ten 7-in., then, in addition, two 40-pr. have been ordered. That I presume makes your total of six 40-prs.; but the report of the artillery commandant at Quebec says that three 7-inch and one 40-prs. were rendered useless by fire, so that we really have in Canada to-day three 40-prs. and seven 7-in. B.L.R. guns. The same officer further says that there are in the Citadel at Quebec only a few rifled guns, none of which could pierce an ironclad at 50 vards rause. If some enemy would bombard Quebec for a few minutes, the 50 yards range. If some enemy would bombard Quebec for a few minutes, the authorities might change their minds and buy modern guns.

OUR ARMY MEDICAL DEPARTMENT.

Lord Wolseley tells us in his handbook that officers should impress upon their men that the wounded of a victorious army are always taken care of whilst those of the beaten side fare badly. Whether this would be true of the Canadian militia, victorious or not, is doubtful.

In the Report, 1878, we find in No. 2 district that "the medicine chest furnished was incomplete in almost every particular, although I went through about half a dozen other medicine chests in the stores to make up deficiencies. Further, I would suggest that the chests be condemned as useless, the most of the medicines being old and inactive. The pills had been in stock since the chests were first issued. In urgent and even dangerous cases I had no immediate means at command to treat actively.

During 1885 a principal medical officer was not allowed for the annual camp, and there was only one medicine chest in camp. What were the contents of the last chest

like, for instance in 1886?

In 1886 our attention is drawn to the very inadequate supply of medicines and appliances. The small quantity of astringents and opiates were exhausted before the end of the first week. There were no bandages, no splints, the adhesive plaster was worthless and unfit for use on account of its age. The medical officer in charge considered the want of these articles a very grave matter, as in the event of severe acci-

dents, the consequences might be terrible.

At Niagara camp, 1887, there were two cases of broken limbs, and we are informed that great inconvenience was caused by the absence of instruments, splints, I wonder how the sergeant with the broken leg appreciated this inconvenience

and the persistent disregard of all reports on this point by the doctors.

In 1887 at the Aldershot camp the medicine chest was not at all satisfactory and was devoid of several important requisites. Surgical instruments and appliances were conspicuously absent. On several occasions men fainted in the ranks, but there was no ambulance service to remove them to hospitals, not even a stretcher. Let me tell this medical officer, should be see this, that there are stretchers in store at Ottawa and that he should badger the life out of them there until he gets what he requires.

At the Kingston camp the medicine chest was handed over nearly empty, but perhaps on the whole that was better than issuing useless old muck, as the "medicine

man" can then order those things which are certain to be required

It is hard work getting at the true state of affairs as regards medicine, instruments, comforts, ambulances, etc., as so few reports are published on this subject. I dare say there are districts in which not even a medicine chest exists.

A SAVING OF AMMUNITION.

I must compliment the country on the great saving of money effected during the past year. At the London camp, "owing to the defective state of the butts, the troops did not perform the usual target practice." During 1885, the 1st Regiment of Cavalry and three companies of the 30th were unable to have an opportunity of target practice while in camp. In 1886 these corps did not drill, and the year during which they did perform their drill they were unable to fire; and in the present year they will not, it is assumed, be called out, so that we find the 1st Regiment of Cavalry stands thus as regards practice:

1882—One troop out. Practice not completed. (?)
1883—Four troops out.
1884—Did not drill.

No ammunition issued. (?)

1885—Four troops out. Did not fire. 1886—Did not drill.

1887—Four troops out. Did not fire. 1888—Probably will not drill and not fire.

So that in seven years this regimen has 29 men who fired (1882) and their practice was not even completed.

With the 30th Battalion it stands:

1882—Nine companies. Practice not carried out; no range. " completed; ammunition issued to 8

1883--Ten companies only.

1884—Did not drill. 1885. Ten companies. Not completed. Three companies did not fire.

1886— Did not drill.

". 1887---No range.

With this corps 72 men on an average have fired during seven years.

These are only samples. You can find the same thing all over the Dominion. In No. 2 district the target practice of the Governor-General's Body Guard did not take (Winchester) not being available. Cavalry there was no time for their practice. As the Cavalry School is armed with the Winchester and they managed to put in their practice, there must be Winchester ammunition available somewhere in the country. As regards the 2nd Regiment, in 1887 there was not sufficient time for that corps' practice, in 1886 it was relieved from drill, the same in 1884, and in 1883, although the regiment drilled at Niagara, it looks very much like as if it did not fire then.

This is a happy state of affairs. Corps armed with a weapon for which there is no ammunition; corps armed with a rifle for which there is inferior ammunition, which

drill, but still it is either no range, no time or no ammunition.

Like the medical question, there are very few reports on target practice—probably it is something not worthy wasting the time on. We are told that by carrying out the practice during camps it ensures every man having some little instruction and compels him to actually fire his rifle. But these facts which I have quoted make it look as if whole corps did not fire. LINCH-PIN.