

# THE CANADIAN MILITIA GAZETTE

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No. 19, of 13th December, 1889.

## Topics of the Week.

A very interesting addition to the literature of the war of 1812-15, has just been made by the publication, in pamphlet form, of an essay compiled by Lieut.-Col. C. S. Jones, commanding the Dufferin Rifles of Canada, and read before the officers and their friends at Brantford on the 2nd inst. This treats of the battle of Stoney Creek, fought at the place so named, some six miles from the present city of Hamilton, at midnight on the 6th June 1813. In this, 700 British and Canadian soldiers, under Col. Harvey, surprised an army of 3500 marauding United States troops, camped for the night at Stoney Creek, and after an hour's engagement put them to rout. The U. S. Brigadier Generals Chandler and Winder, the first and second in command, were taken prisoners, together with upwards of 100 officers and privates. The British loss was 1 officer, 22 non commissioned officers and men killed; 12 officers, 124 n. c. o. and men wounded, and 58 n. c. o. and men missing. The essay closes with an expression of regret that no stone has yet been erected to perpetuate the memory of this deed of valour.

The rifle league scheme continues to flourish, and as will be seen by reference to the list in another column the league has been equipped with a full complement of officers—provisional, of course. We are informed that the object the promoters had in view in naming such a list at this time, was simply to give definite shape to the affair, so that it may be taken hold of in earnest at the annual meeting now fixed to take place at Ottawa on the 5th of February, the day of the annual business meeting of the Dominion Rifle Association, which always brings a number of outside riflemen to the Capital. It would be quite fitting to discuss, between now and then, whether such elaborate machinery is needed at all for the league; and whether, should such a large governing body be deemed advisable, representation should not be accorded each team entering, in place of having a fixed number from each shooting centre, as suggested. Time will be precious on the day of the meeting, and it would be well to have such matters as this talked over well in advance.

An effectual bar, in many cases, to the militiamen becoming good shots, is the expense incidental to practice. While there will always be a sufficient number of men with leisure and money to keep up the show of general rifle practice now seen, as a general rule the militia cannot afford to practise enough to become reasonably efficient. In view of this state of affairs, we would respectfully suggest to the Minister of

Militia that he take into consideration the advisability of reducing the price of Snider ammunition say to one cent a round. Even if part of the money now paid to rifle associations were diverted to this purpose, it would be a good idea. It would certainly thus be more widely distributed.

Were the cost of rifle shooting lessened to the Canadian force, the Government might make reasonable efficiency compulsory as a condition of obtaining drill pay and allowances. Such a step was taken a few years ago by the British Government with respect to the Volunteers, and the result there was referred to by Lord Harris in a recent address to the 1st V. B. Sussex Regiment. He was delighted, he said, to hear their Colonel state that the corps had succeeded in coming up to the musketry test imposed, and he was happy to know that those results corresponded to a great extent with the results in all corps of the country. Three years ago they found that Volunteers had merely to fire a certain number of rounds without any inducement to make a good pattern on the target. That appeared to them to be ridiculous, and they thought it their bounden duty to encourage every volunteer to become a good shot, and he was happy to say the result of their insisting on efficiency with the rifle had proved to be no great discouragement to the Volunteer force. It had got rid of a certain number of men, but perhaps they were not of much use to the Army.

The *United Service Gazette* notes that the Imperial Government will shortly be asked to contribute to the cost of lengthening the graving dock at Esquima'tt, British Columbia. The amount originally granted by Parliament for the construction of this dock was £50,000, and now another £10,000, being just half the sum needed for this work, is applied for. It has been discovered that the dock, which is only 430 feet in length, will not be nearly long enough for the mail steamers which the Canadian Pacific Railway Company are constructing, and as the Imperial Government is greatly interested in the new mail service it is thought that they will not unwillingly subsidize the improvement of the Esquima'tt Dock. If the proposed work is carried out the dock will be without exception the finest on the Pacific coast.

The volume of the Public Accounts just issued shows the total expenditure for militia purposes, during the fiscal year ended 30th June last, to have been \$1,323,551, of which the large proportion of upwards of one-third, or \$489,588, went for the support of the permanent corps and the schools in connection therewith. The Royal Military College expenditure was \$51,236. The drill pay amounted to \$286,637; the cost of clothing to \$113,774. The cost of the ammunition expended was but \$43,157. Besides the militia expenditure included in the total given above, there is a military pension list amounting to \$36,391. Of this, \$25,942 is on account of the North-west rebellion of 1885. The North-west Mounted Police, who serve in our new territory the purpose of a military force, cost in the fiscal year \$829,701.