

report were carried out, we have found them decided improvements, and it is only matter for regret that we cannot report any improvement in the care of our property, nor the care of our ranges.

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Capt. and Major,
Secretary P.Q.R.A.

Montreal, December, 1886.

Red Tape.

WHAT army man, nay for matter of that, what naval man, has not suffered from the restraints imposed on him by red tape? To men who have spent their lives in a public office that which the world designates "red tape" appears an admirably devised system for preserving regularity and order in the conduct of public business. But as a certain commanding officer said to his adjutant, "That is a capital plan of yours of locking up important papers in your despatch-box, but you never can find them when I want them;" so the system of "red tape," instead of simplifying public business, tends to retard it, and necessitates legions of clerks, whose sole business it is to register and counter-register, and check correspondence, and who have no more to do with the working of the machine than a ticket-collector has to do with the working of a railway. So intricate is the system, and so voluminous the correspondence, that if it is desired to obtain information stored up in a public office, it is easier to obtain it from the original sources, than to seek it among the "archives." If half the papers were burnt directly they came into a public office without being looked at, and the other half burned six months afterwards, no one would be a penny the worse. Just imagine some great public office divided like a beehive into compartments, each of which deals with a particular branch of the service. Into this penetrates with fear and trembling some timid taxpayer in search of information. He mentions his business to the porter, who tells him that Department A will give him the information he requires. He goes to A, but A says that the business is more strictly B's. He goes to B, who treats the matter as no child of his, says it is C's, and bows the inquirer out. He goes on to C, and after a deal of trouble and waste of time, perhaps he finds out what he wants—perhaps he doesn't; but he certainly goes away not favorably impressed with the advantages of the "red tape" system. This is the "red tape" of official correspondence. There is another sort of "red tape"—that of routine; of this an amusing instance has lately been given by General Drayson in his *Recollections*. An officer who has been retired on half or full pay has, at the end of each quarter, when applying for his pay, to send in a certificate, duly witnessed, that he is alive and kicking. For some reason or another, General Drayson on one occasion did, what is very unusual with army men, namely, fail to draw his pay for two successive quarters, and on the third quarter made his application, and sent in his usual certificate. His application was returned to him, with the request that he would send in the certificates that he was alive at the end of the preceding quarters. If we did not know that there was no sense of humor in any public department—in fact, the officials are not expected to possess any—we should have said it was what the Scotch call a bit of "wut." This anecdote embodies the spirit of "red tape." It is this "red tape" which strangles inventors, and causes army reformers to tear their hair. Through "red tape" ten-inch guns are sent to one station, and their carriages to another; through red tape bad hay is bought at £4 a ton when good can be bought in the market for £2, and deposes a young officer who does not know hay from straw to pass it; through red-tape a sergeant and four men, perhaps an officer also, are sent to escort a parcel of ammunition that could be carried in a travelling-bag by railway from one station to another. It is red-tape that assembles three officers from distant stations, at a considerable cost for travelling and personal allowances, to sit on a board to determine whether the officer commanding a company or the public shall pay 1s. 6d. for a damaged pouch. Through red tape improvident contracts are made; and it is owing to red tape, and not to any dishonesty of officials, that defective arms and equipment are passed into the service. Every public man has heard of and scoffed at red tape, and thought how very differently he would manage matters if he were placed in a responsible position; but directly he gets into office the permanent officials get round him, and bind him hand and foot with red tape in his official chair, so that he ceases to have any volition, and simply signs his name to documents which are put before him. The public service of every country is more or less hampered by the bonds of red tape, and perhaps the lamentable collapse of France in 1870 was owing to its mischievous powers. Everything that an army could require was found to be wanting—men, arms, ammunition, maps, even Marshal Bœuf's gaiter button. Reserve men had to go to Algeria to get their equipment, and to return to Chalons to join their corps. Such lessons, however, have no effect on the official mind; it clings to the system as if it were revealed from heaven, and when a catastrophe comes it assures the world that matters are so bad because the system was not sufficiently thorough. It is useless

to look forward to the abolition of red tape in the public service, it is one of those things which, like dry rot, grows and grows, nothing will eradicate it, and the only remedy is to destroy the whole surface where it exists. We can only hope that the disease of red tape which exists in our naval and military services will not prove so destructive when our day of trial comes as it did to the French.—*Broad Arrow*.

The Noon Gun's Soliloquy.

A CERTAIN Miss Mary lately wrote to the Quebec *Morning Chronicle* asking why the gun fired every noontide from the Citadel had been somewhat irregular as to time, to which enquiry a gunner rose to explain that in consequence of inclemency of weather the firing party had sometimes missed seeing the firing signal. Some good-natured bantering letters followed, culminating in the following "pome," which, judging by the initials, was written by a popular battery commander—

(With Apologies to the Author of *Locksley Hall*.)

Comrades, leave me here a little, while the snow drifts down my bore,
And the icy norther freezes chilly thro' my cast-iron core;
Every place is thronged with snow drifts, o'er the ramparts piles the snow,
I have but an angry fancy; what is that which I should do?
Leave me here in bitter anguish, wrestling with my Mary's blame,
Heaving sobs of wild repentance, thrilling thro' my iron frame.
Oh, my Mary, cruel hearted! Oh, my Mary, mine no more!
Oh, the dreary, dreary Bastion! Oh, the icebound Levis shore!
Yes, she said, did cruel Mary, with an accent most emphatic,
That of late, in her opinion, all my moves had been erratic.
"All my movements most erratic!" I who've never left this spot,
On the Royal Bastion keeping watch and ward o'er piles of shot!
Never slipped out of my carriage, never went upon the spree;
Always kept my trunnions level, know not aught of S and B!
Never tasted gin unsweetened, vote the Scott Act every time!
(Though a drink might be forgiv'n to one who dwells in such a clime.)
I who live midst ancient smoothbores, nothing fast in them or me,
Naught we know of Pebble Powder, or Prismatic, or P. P.!
Never heard we of rotation, never of air spacing, naught
Of the modern powder chamber, and all rubbish of that sort!
Curséd by the frozen clime that stops my vent with icy plug!
Curséd by the cruel blizzard, blinding in its frozen hug!
Blinding my poor ear nipp'd gunners, so that signal none they see,
Deafening them in howling snow-drifts, bringing blame on them and me.
Better were I smashed in pieces, broken up as iron ore,
Rubbish ready for the smelting, piled in Major Prevost's store.
Well—'tis well that I should bluster!—Had'st thou proved more kind to me—
Would to Heaven—for I had fired as if by an electric key—
For I dip into the future, more than smoothbore's eyes *should* see,
See the future of Quebec, and all the wonders that shall be;
See the Heights crowned, cantilevered, with our new bridge broad and strong;
See the Ramparts armed with ordnance, new patterned breech-loaders long;
Hear my happier successor firing to the second true,
As th' electric current flashing, passes thro' his breech-vent new;
Then will Mary, old and formal, say with sour and palsied tongue,
Ah! that noon gun's not as punctual as it was when I was young!

C. L.

Infantry Fire Tactics.

ON Easter Monday Major Mayne, of the Royal Engineers, and professor at the R.M.C., Kingston, lectured to the 10th Royal Grenadiers at Toronto, on "Infantry Fire Tactics." The lecture was a short synopsis of his book, which was published a year or two ago, and is now considered to be one of the most important military works ever written.

By a series of diagrams the lecturer showed how by using a full foresight with a Martini-Enfield the whole of the shots would go over a man at a 400 yard range until he had walked up to within 50 yards of the rifle if the shots were aimed at the stomach, but if aimed at the feet the whole range up to 400 yards would be covered with a hail of lead by shots and ricochets, never mind how unsteady was the firer. After entering fully into this portion of the subject, with blackboard diagrams and interesting reminiscences of his campaign with General Roberts in Afghanistan, the lecturer proceeded to discuss controlled and uncontrolled fire, strongly advocating the German system of groups, etc. He said "it is highly necessary that the men should be trained to work in groups when at a distance from the enemy, and then independence of action is only to begin when control is no longer possible. So far as accuracy is concerned, group firing is superior to individual firing, and ten men firing ten volleys will make a better pattern on the target than ten men firing 100 rounds independently."

The major spoke most of the fire of the Martini-Enfield, because he believes that to be the best military weapon in use, and thought that one great thing would come out of the conference now being held in London, and that was the arming of all British troops, home and colonial, alike; he therefore thought that rifle would soon be in the hands of his hearers. He then gave a brief sketch of the various magazine or repeating rifles now in use in foreign armies. He advocated the use of the hopper system, amongst other reasons because it was easier for the officers and n.c.o.'s commanding sections to control the fire. The maga-