

THE CANADIAN MILITIA GAZETTE

A Weekly Journal devoted to the Interests of the Active Force of the Dominion.

Fifth Year.
VOL. IV, No. 50.

OTTAWA, THURSDAY, 12th DECEMBER, 1889.

\$1.50 per annum in advance
Single Copies Five Cents.

CONTENTS OF THIS NUMBER.

TOPICS OF THE WEEK.
Suggestions invited.
Our Correspondence Columns.
A general efficiency competition.
An enthusiastic officer.
Lieut. Stairs.
The D.R.A. ranges.
President Harrison's message.
New Zealand's volunteer troubles.

THE U. S. ARMY REFORM.
Radical Suggestions by Gen. Lew Wallace.

THE AUSTRALIAN DEFENCES.
Proposed organization of the forces.

NOTICES OF NEW BOOKS.

THE MOTHER COUNTRY.
What the Volunteers there are about.

REGIMENTAL NEWS.
STANLEY'S RIGHT HAND MAN.
A letter from Lieut. Stairs—College reminiscences.

THE RIFLE.
Major Peters offers a prize.
The Military Rifle League.
Annual match for the permanent corps.
How to learn to shoot.
Mounted Rifle practice.
England's new rifle.
Trouble with the powder.

CLEANINGS.

Topics of the Week.

We would invite those of our readers who have any suggestions to make in connection with matters affecting the militia to come up in Parliament, or at the annual business meetings of the Dominion Rifle and Artillery associations, to make use of our columns for that purpose. Much good may be accomplished by such an interchange of ideas.

Indirectly, it comes to our hearing every now and again, that so-and-so would like to have ventilated a certain subject in the *MILITIA GAZETTE*, but refrained from sending a letter, as he had supposed it would not be inserted. Now, how anyone has obtained such an impression we do not understand, as we cannot recall an instance of the suppression of any communication of a nature such as to warrant publication in a paper of good standing. We invite fair comment, from any responsible person desiring to make it, on any subject coming within the scope of this paper. We do not wish to furnish facilities for anonymous political attacks, or personal reflections, from which no good can come, but honest, manly criticism has at all times been welcomed. The difficulty of ascertaining and fully understanding the desires, the necessities, or the grievances of the militia, more especially in the case of corps in the outlying provinces, would be minimized were more general advantage taken of the cordial invitation of the *MILITIA GAZETTE* to make use of its columns. And it is obvious that we can best help those who thus help themselves.

It is not at all improbable that a general efficiency competition for the Infantry and Rifles will be a feature of next season's drill. The suggestions in this connection made on several occasions by the *MILITIA GAZETTE* have, we are informed, led to informal discussions of the proposition in some of the chief militia centres, and a definite scheme is likely to be formulated in the near future.

Attention is directed to the proposition, published in our Rifle news of this week, of an annual competition for the permanent corps, this being promoted by Major Peters, of C Battery R.C.A., located at Victoria, B.C. The idea certainly is a good one, and we hope that a general disposition will be shown to join in the competition. We would suggest the choice of a date later in the season than that named, so that the

teams might have greater opportunities for practice, and thus derive more benefit from the competition. If rifle shooting does not become a popular pursuit with the permanent corps, it certainly will not be Major Peters' fault. In addition to promoting the scheme above referred to, that enthusiastic officer this week gives notification of a substantial prize he intends to annually present to the non-commissioned members of that body making the highest score in his class firing.

All Canadians, and especially friends of his Military College days, will rejoice at the distinction Lieut. Stairs has achieved by his connection with the Stanley expedition in the Dark Continent. The intrepid explorer made a wise choice, when out of a host of aspirants he took for his right-hand man the hardy young Canadian, whose crowning recommendation, no doubt, was that he had added to his theoretical training in our Royal Military College two or three years of practical surveying experience in the wilds of New Zealand, thus peculiarly fitting himself for a position of trust in the now famous expedition.

The Rideau rifle range at Ottawa is no doubt destined to be closed within a few years, unless the Government or the Dominion Rifle Association purchase the property. Looking forward to the end of Rideau, the Montreal riflemen are disposed to urge that future Dominion meetings should be held upon their range. A D.R.A. committee was appointed some time last year, to report upon the subject of a new range, but we believe it has so far failed to report.

President Harrison's first message to Congress contains these references to the subject of the national defence: "Judged by modern standards, we are practically without coast defences. Many of the structures we have would enhance rather than diminish the perils of their garrisons if subjected to the fire of improved guns; and very few are so located as to give full effect to the greater range of such guns as we are now making for coast defence uses. This general subject has had consideration in Congress for some years, and the appropriation for the construction of large rifled guns made one year ago was, I am sure, the expression of a purpose to provide suitable works in which these guns might be mounted. An appropriation now made for that purpose would not advance the completion of the works beyond our ability to supply them with fairly effective guns. The security of our coast cities against foreign attack should not rest altogether in the friendly disposition of other nations. There should be a second line wholly in our own keeping. I very urgently recommend an appropriation at this session for the construction of such works in our most exposed harbours. I approve the suggestion of the Secretary of War that provision be made for encamping companies in the National Guard in our coast works for a specified time each year, and for their training in the use of heavy guns. His suggestion that an increase of the artillery force of the army is desirable is also in this connection commended to the consideration of Congress."