

## Queries and Replies.

We have received the following anonymous communication in reference to the query in our issue of the 13th asking the authority for the promotion of certain graduates of the R.M.C.:

"If the editor MILITIA GAZETTE will look at G. O. Feb. 5th, '80, he will there find provision made for promotion of officers (graduates R. M. College), so that the promotions of the assistant instructors in mathematics and surveying was not by his Excellency's pleasure solely, but in accordance with militia regulations."

G. O.

We accordingly looked up the general orders and find the following, dated 6th February, 1880:—No. 3, part 2, par. 3. "Promotions to higher grade of rank will be made from this list after a specified period of service in each rank. The period to be hereafter fixed." Now as no period has since been fixed we still think that we were right and G. O. wrong. As G. O. posted his letter in Ottawa why did he not come in and see us, and argue the thing out amicably.—ED.

## Correspondence.

The Editor desires it distinctly understood that he does not hold himself responsible for the opinions expressed by correspondents.

PAID DRILL INSTRUCTORS.

To the Editor of the Canadian Militia Gazette.

SIR,—That an instructor of musketry is wanted on the permanent staff of our militia battalions is made evident whenever a visit is paid to the butts during class firing. That the adjutant could carry out these duties, provided he earned sufficient pay, is also manifest; but, that graduates straight from our military college could undertake these duties I do not for a moment deem possible. A man must have a deal of knowledge of regimental routine, interior economy of corps, and have confidence in himself,—accomplishments never or seldom acquired, unless one has served a year or so with a regular regiment. You say: "If these young men were offered commissions as lieutenants, with some prospect of promotion after a reasonable length of satisfactory service, probably sufficient of them to meet all requirements would prefer the appointment to an Imperial commission." Very good, but what is to become of the regiments while these young officers are learning the work of nursing a regiment?—for that is what it practically comes to. I would suggest that those young cadet officers desiring to become ultimately adjutants of our militia regiments be made to join one of the military schools on passing out of the college. There he should go through a (12) twelve months' course, during which he will be able to handle "men," learn the various rudiments and further branches of drill, and also, be put through, practically, a course of musketry instruction. Then, on being appointed, he should be able to thoroughly instruct the regiment from the colonel downwards; take a squad of non-coms. and put them through the (3) practices of musketry instruction prior to the regimental preliminary drills; and thus, by the date of the first annual regimental parade, so smarten up the company, officers and non-commissioned officers in their squad drill, rifle exercises and company drill, that we would hear less empty shouting, more lucid and correct explanations, and better work done all round by the instructors than at present is the case, a change that could hardly fail to result satisfactorily to all concerned. At present, let any one casually stroll into a parade ground where the various companies are being instructed(?) by the officers or color-sergeants. Unless it happens that the instructor is an old soldier, this is the sort of thing one sees and hears: "Comp'ny, attention!" (instead of a smart 'tion!) "Quick-march, left wheel, left wheel,—forward; right turn (given on the wrong foot), right wheel—front form squad" (no preliminary cautions given, consequently a general mix up.) Then again, ten or a dozen squads will be kept marching about, no two keeping the same step. Some are doing 80 to 90 paces to the minute, others dragging, and marching under the correct time. Why is it that a company drummer is not under orders to parade with companies? Then, when half battalions are drilling, broken up in squads, the regular beat—by verbal direction, or by pace machine—can be tapped by the lad on the drum, so that all the squads can keep to a regular pace and in time. Likewise, at battalion parades, when companies are being marched about by company officers, two drummers, standing in the middle of the parade ground, or if in a hall, on an elevated stand, can give the time to all the companies when marching about. But, if there is a man in the regiment qualified to take the position of adjutant and musketry instructor, how then? There is a very excellent rule in most of our crack Canadian regiments, as for instance, in Montreal, the G. A., the Vics., and the Royal Scots, that the officers rise from the ranks. These should be the men to receive the first consideration at the hands of their commanding officer. Let their officers have the first chance, and then the non-commissioned officers. Failing them, then go to the R.M.C. The officer or non-com. officer should be sent to a school, and, on passing the required examination, be posted to the adjutancy, in the ordinary way. "Many men can hardly afford to keep their positions as officers," say some. Good! Make the sergeant-major's post worth having, and let his position be sergeant-major and drill instructor. He is then a warrant officer, and escapes the expenses of the officers, and, if a gentleman, will have sufficient tact to be able to keep his juniors in their places, and at the same time treat his seniors in rank, but equals in the social scale, with proper deference. The officers will not object to being put through their facings by him, on the contrary, they would like it and enter into their work with pleasure. The present adjutants will be asking "What's to become of us?" If they are smart drills, and the colonel is satisfied as to their qualifications for keeping up the standard of efficiency of the regiment, why let them stay, if they have not served 10 years in their present post. Ten years should be the limit to each officer holding the position—unless specially recommended for a further period of 5 years, on completion of which he should be allowed to retire with the rank of major, or as lieutenant-col. if he has served 21 years (in the militia force) by the date of his compulsory retirement. One thing more. The adjutant must be a good horseman. If he cannot prove to the satisfaction of the D.A.G. that he can ride, he should be compelled to obtain a certificate in equitation from some military school teaching that branch. Now I have accepted, Mr. Editor, your invitation to "discuss the question at length"—at too great a length I fear. However, I am an interested party, so have written what I think on the matter. If my suggestion about combining the sergeant-major's post with instructor is poo-pooed, I answer—make him a grant and let him be sergeant-majors and assistant drill instructor, and you will get better men than you have now. At present our sergeant-major's are in good positions, and we cannot afford to lose them to attend to regimental work. As you rightly say, the expense and extra pay to adjutants would be not much, while the improvement in efficiency of corps would be well worth the money.

A SCOT'S GUARDSMAN.

Montreal 17th, 1887.

To the Editor of the Canadian Militia Gazette.

SIR,—The remarks in your issue of 13th inst. in regard to the desirability of having paid adjutants attached to the city corps, appear to me to be very much to the point. Although not a member of a city corps, I have had some experience of the benefit such an appointment would confer in the rural battalion of which I am a member. The 42nd battalion, to which I have the honor to belong, was fortunate enough to have the services of Lieut. J. B. Cochrane, of the Royal Military College staff, as acting adjutant during four successive brigade camps, at three of which I was present. The benefit which the battalion reaped through having such a competent officer as adjutant cannot be over-estimated, and it was largely owing to his untiring efforts that the regiment reached the state of efficiency which it aimed at, through all ranks. The regiment owes a debt of gratitude to Capt. Cochrane for the energy and unsparring pains which he devoted to the instruction of everybody in the smallest details of military drill and duty. The lightening of the labor and care devolving on the commanding officer was very apparent, and must be much more so in the case of a city battalion, who are, as it were, always on duty. Although not directly interested, I should be delighted if some such arrangement as you advocate was carried out.

G. GORDON HUTCHESON,  
Lieut. No. 2 Co., 42nd Batt.

HONOR TO WHOM HONOR IS DUE.

To the Editor of the Canadian Militia Gazette.

SIR,—I see by the public press that several Canadian officers are to be honored by being decorated with the new "order of merit" for distinguished services, the names of Gen. Strange, Lieut.-Col. Otter, and of all officers who commanded regiments in the late North-West campaign being specified.

I certainly hope for the reputation of the "order of merit" that the said report is very much exaggerated.

Certain officers who commanded brigades, also certain officers of militia headquarters staff, and possibly a few others who were mentioned in despatches, certainly deserve some recognition of their meritorious services which has so far been withheld, and it is a shame that their claims have not been rewarded sooner, as was said to have been intended, but dropped for fear of offending a few undeserving friends; but to say that all officers commanding regiments in the late campaign should be so decorated would make the order of merit decidedly cheap, and would, instead of being a well earned reward, be quite the reverse.

I do not know whether you are aware of the fact, but I presume you are, that there were some officers commanding regiments in the late campaign who were openly reproved by their superior officers. These did not reach the scene of action, and their regiments were rendered efficient through painstaking and efficient subordinate officers on whom the responsibility devolved. That such should be ranked with such men as Gen. Strange, Cols. Powell, Otter and others, is enough to bring a blush to the many admirers of the ability of those named.

Other commanding officers who, having the necessary ability, were denied opportunities of displaying it, would, I am sure, not feel hurt at the named gentlemen, and any recommended by the major-general commanding, receiving that reward which all ambitious officers look forward to obtain when opportunity offers.

FIELD OFFICER.

LONG SERVICE MEDAL AND JUBILEE YEAR.

To the Editor of the Canadian Militia Gazette.

SIR,—The practical and valuable suggestion I noticed in your paper of the 13th deserves the thanks of all our militiamen. I feel sure that, if a memorandum were drawn up, signed by the various C.O.'s of regiments and countersigned by the various D.A.G.'s, the matter would meet with the approval of our Minister. The impetus that the granting of a medal would give to recruiting cannot be for a moment anticipated. It would show that we are not only militia in name, but a force recognized as soldiers in reality.

The North-West campaign proved of what stuff Canadian soldiers are made, as did the Egyptian contingent. The granting of a medal and good conduct stripes would be another incentive for the prompt attendance of Canadians, when next our services are in request.

Then, should we be brigaded with regulars, the militiamen of the Dominion would be more firmly associated with their companions in arms, and feel a greater pride when wearing their uniform.

RIFLEMAN.

## Mess Room Yarns.

ROUGH ON THE MAJOR.

The major commanding one of our field batteries is a smart officer, but a comparatively small man, while his surgeon is six feet high, and weighs three hundred-weight. At a parade last year the major was moving the guns about in a lively way, when the following dialogue was overheard between a couple of unwashed spectators: "Say, Bill, which of them fellers is the boss gunner?" "Why! the big chap, in course, don't you see he keeps the little un to do the shouting for him."

ONE REASON FOR CURVING A SABRE.

Sergeant instructor to trooper—"Why is the blade of the sabre curved instead of straight?" Trooper—"It is curved in order to give more force to a blow." Sergeant instructor—"Humb! the sabre is curved so that it will fit the scabbard. If it were straight how would it get into the crooked scabbard, blockhead?"

AN IRISH RIDING-MASTER.

An Irish riding-master was in the riding-school putting a class of recruits through various evolutions. One awkward youngster tumbled off his charger and alighted on the tan. "What is up wid yez?" yelled the officer. "Since ye're so fond ov lyin' on yer back, just get on to yer saddle wid yez, and I'll whip yer old horse round the school, and make yez fall off a dozen times for every time yez mount!"