

BRANTFORD.

The Dufferin rifles, of Brantford, last week held their annual dinner, which, from the speeches made, especially that of the Minister of Militia, Hon. J. C. Patterson, made it an affair of more than ordinary interest. Last week I asked a question about the new rifles, and now the head of the forces in Canada, in the Government, gives the reply, which will be greeted with joy by volunteers all over the Dominion. Not only this, but all can see plainly, as was predicted in this column when the present Minister assumed the portfolio, that at last there is a head who can be depended upon to do his best to make the Canadian militia the best in the world. The Brantford Expositor devotes three columns to the account of the proceedings. The chairman was Lt. Col. Jones, the Dufferin's C. O., while the principal guests were Hon. J. C. Patterson, Hon. Lt. Col. J. M. Gibson, president of the Dominion Rifle Association; Hon. A. S. Hardy and W. Patterson, M. P. The Expositor says: "Mr. Patterson promises, if he carries out his pledges, as there is every reason to believe he will, so far as it is in his power, to give the Militia Department what it has been lacking for many years past—a capable head. Disregarding all red-tapeism, he is acquainting himself with the requirements of the force, and inviting those interested in its improvement to send their suggestions direct to him, and thus avoid pigeon-holding in the musty shelves of the department." To the toast of "Our Guest," the Minister responded, and after referring to the opening of the new drill hall at Brantford and to the history of the corps, told what had been done to secure the new Martini-Metford rifles. He said that 1,000 stand of arms had been purchased from the makers and paid for, but since then they had arranged for 8,000 more from the Imperial Government at more reasonable rates. In addition arrangements were being made with the Imperial Government for the conversion of the Martini-Henry rifles, which they had in store in Canada. When this had been done they would have 15,000 stand of arms with which to equip the riflemen of Canada. These arms would be paid for on long time, so that the burden would not be too much felt by the people of Canada.

NAVAL AND MILITARY NEWS.

In the Imperial House of Commons, Mr. Woodall stated, in answer to Mr. Brodrick, that it was proposed to arm the Militia, probably early next year, with the Lee-Metford rifle.—Replying to Mr. Tomlinson, Mr. Woodall said it was intended to arm the Volunteers also with this rifle, but he could not say in what time, although he thought it could be a reasonable time.

Major-General G. J. Smart, R.A., commanding the Artillery at Gibraltar, has been appointed to the command of the Woolwick District, vice Major-General O. H. A. Nicolls, R.A., resigned. General Smart joined the army June 18th, 1851, and became major-general November 1st,

1890. He served in India in 1857-58, and was present at the actions of Chanda and Sultanpore, siege and capture of Lucknow, actions of Barree, Sirsee, and Nawabgunge (twice mentioned in despatches, medal with clasp.)

The failure in India of the black pellet powder cartridges with the Lee-Metford rifle has attracted the notice of the military authorities. Inquiries show that they all belong apparently to one particular consignment from England, manufactured by a private contractor. Their distribution in India is known, and they will be used up in practice at short ranges, as they are effective up to 500 yards.

We learn from India that "the Lee-Metford rifle has stood the test in India of ten thousand rounds of black powder ball ammunition most satisfactorily, but the rifling was worn away after less than three thousand rounds of cordite."

By the departure of the 1st Battalion Somersetshire Light Infantry from Malta, effect is given to the decision recently arrived at by the military authorities to reduce the garrison of that fortress by one battalion

The new cruiser Powerful, if she fulfils the promise of her design, should be a magnificent vessel. As yet, however, we have been told very little about the manner in which her armament is to be disposed. It is somewhat remarkable that it should have been necessary to go to France for suitable boilers for the new ship, especially when there are so many types of tubulous boilers patented by English firms. It is to be noted, also, that the Belleville boilers have not yet been tried in a British man-of-war, although a set have been supplied for the Sharpshooter, whose trials will probably have taken place before the Powerful is ready. It is anticipated that the new cruiser will have a continuous sea speed of 20 knots, while on an eight hours' natural draught contractor's trial the speed will be 22 knots, and on a few hours' forced draught 24 knots is expected. She will thus be the fastest cruiser in the world, although the Minneapolis may be expected to run her very close in this respect.

It has been announced that the War Office authorities have declined the Duke of Westminster's offer of a site for military barracks at Chester, and this, it is believed, means that Chester will sooner or later lose its position as headquarters of the North-Western Military District.

Recent returns show that the whole number of horses and mules possessed by the British army is within a few of 27,000, of whom rather more than 12,000 are with the European troops in India, and the remainder at home, in Egypt and Natal. The cavalry regiments have 12,000 horses (exclusive of officers' horses, these, as in other branches of the army, being private property); the Royal Artillery, 12,

500 horses and mules for riding and gun teams; the Royal Engineers, only about 400; the infantry, 700; for transport and mounted infantry training and the Army Service Corps, 1,200. The cavalry regiments have only enough horses to mount about two-thirds of their men, the three Household regiments, which number 1,300 non-commissioned officers and men, having 800 horses. Several of the regiments in India can mount more than 500 men, but even these have nearly 600 men to use them; while in some of the home regiments the disproportion between men and horses is as great, or greater, than in the Life and Horse Guards.

The Earl of Denbigh, Lieut. Col. of the Hon. Artillery Company of London, has intimated to the regiment that there has been a decided improvement during the past year in comparison with previous years. This is especially noticeable in the Infantry Battalion, whose percentage of efficient shows an increase from 89.29 to 91.23, and an advance of musketry efficient from 91.15 to 96.01. The Horse Artillery shows an advance from 80.00 to 81.82, but the Field Battery shows a slight decrease in percentage of efficient, which is now 84.50.

In a circular issued to the Fleet the Admiralty directs that Roman Catholics, Presbyterians, Wesleyan Methodists, and men who object on religious grounds to joining the services of the Church of England are to have full liberty to absent themselves from such services.

The Royal Marines have reason to be gratified at the recognition of the corps by His Royal Highness the Duke of Saxe-Coburg Gotha. The following memorandum has been received at the several Divisions: "His Royal Highness the Duke of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha, being anxious to mark, upon his accession to the Duchies, his long connection with the corps of Royal Marines, has been pleased to confer upon Lieutenant-General H. B. Tison, C. B., Deputy-Adjutant-General of the corps, with the permission of Her Most Gracious Majesty the Queen, the decoration of the Saxe-Ernestine Order, first class." For many years as an Admiral in the British Navy the Duke of Edinburgh was honorary Colonel of the Royal Marines, and His Royal Highness has lost no time, when the opportunity has fallen to his power, of thus showing his appreciation of that branch of the Naval Service.

The British Medical Journal says that Surgeon-Major Lloyd has been recommended for the Victoria Cross for his gallant conduct in the operations carried out by the Burmah Military Police in the Kachin Hills during 1892-93.

The Royal Warrant now being prepared for the issue of the Queen's decorations to non-commissioned officers and men of twenty years' and upwards efficient service in the British Volunteer Force will short-