

GOSSIP OF THE MILITIA.

Formal Opening of the Royal School of Infantry at London.

A description of the Institution—Critique on the Armament of the Canadian Artillery—A handsome gift from the M. G. A. to the Vics—Changes in the officers of the Guards—The lacrosse club of the 90th.

INTIMATION has been received that Lieut. Dudley W. Ridout, who after graduating from the Royal Military College, Kingston, in 1885, accepted a lieutenancy in the Royal Engineers, has just been promoted to a position on the engineers staff of the war office.

The lacrosse club in connection with the 90th Rifles, Winnipeg, have formed a company to be incorporated under the name of the Ninetieth Park Association, with a capital of \$10,000, to acquire and maintain a park for the purposes of the club.

London.

LONDON'S Royal School of Infantry having been opened on Monday of this week, some particulars concerning the institution, and "D" company of the infantry corps in connection with these schools, will not be out of place. The *FREE PRESS* of Monday morning contained an interesting account of a visit paid by one of its reporters, together with a brief historical preface as follows:

"Some eight or ten years ago the question of establishing schools for military instruction in infantry manœuvres was mooted in the Dominion Parliament. The question was favourably discussed at three or four succeeding sessions of the House, but for good and sufficient reasons action on the motion for their establishment was deferred. In the Parliament of 1882-83 the motion to institute a series of schools of this class, as the country might develop a need for them, was introduced by Sir Adolphe Caron, the Minister of Militia, and passed the House without dissension. The next year (1883) "A" company was formed and stationed at Fredericton, New Brunswick. In the fall of the same year another company was recruited and given headquarters in Quebec province. The next summer the first infantry school in Ontario was established at Toronto and designated "C" school. It soon became apparent to those in authority that the institution named was not at all adequate to the needs of such a large Province, and an Order-in-Council was issued two years ago for an additional company to be stationed in this city, as the military, as well as commercial, centre of the western peninsula. So much by way of introduction.

IN THE BARRACKS.

The reporter, after passing the main guard, was shown to the Commandant's office, and courteously received by Col. Smith. In traversing the immense institution the Colonel explained the necessity of each department in his thorough-going style. The first apartment visited was the store room, the shelves on either of the four walls and tables in the centre of which were piled with uniforms, underclothing, boots, helmets and the other requisites.

"Of what does an outfit consist?" inquired the reporter.

"When a man enlists he is furnished with a cloth tunic for parade, a tweed tunic for lounging around in, a pair of pants, two grey flannel shirts, two heavy undershirts, a pair of top boots, a cap and a helmet, pair of mitts, a fork, knife, spoon, razor and other small articles."

"How often is this outfit renewed?"

"The original outfit is made to do duty for the three years of enlistment," replied the Colonel.

"You speak of three years' enlistment. Does that mean that the soldiers are given instruction for that period, or are they regular soldiers in the proper sense?"

"They are regular soldiers," was the reply. "I am glad you put that question, for a misapprehension seems to have gone abroad as to the relation of the regular staff to the school, conveying the idea to the general mind that these men have simply enlisted for that term to gratify their innate desire to become soldiers. They form the nucleus of a Canadian standing army, and may be called upon to do service in any part of the Dominion at a moment's notice in case of an emergency, as was instanced in the North-West rebellion in 1885, when "C" company was the first to be placed under orders to proceed to the seat of the disturbance. But the primary and estensible object of this corps is to afford proper instruction to officers, non-commissioned officers and men of the active militia of the country who wish to make themselves more prominent in the service."

THE MEN'S QUARTERS.

The next rooms visited were the barracks where the men are quartered. In each of these are fifteen iron bedsteads, which are folded up during the day time. On a shelf, which runs round a room, are stored the clothing and nick-nack of the men. It is the intention shortly to provide boxes in which to store this clothing, which will tend to give the room a more tidy appearance.

On entering the first of the barrack rooms the Colonel made a close scrutiny of the belts and clothing of the men, which were exhibited on the shelf, and fastened his eyes on one which had not been properly pipeclayed.

"Whose is that?" was asked of Sergt. Burnham.

"Private—s. sir. I have instructed him to have them cleaned by to-morrow morning."

"This dilatoriness must be checked at once. Report him, and we will have him put on the gates to-night."

A visit was paid to the other barrack rooms, but in each of these everything was found in good order. As soon as possible the names of the occupants of the beds will be emblazoned over them, and thus facilitate the work of inspection by the officers.

On entering the kitchen two red-coats were observed cutting some cold meat for hash. Passing through this the dining-room of the men was entered.

"Is it customary to allow all the men to mess together in these institutions?" was again queried.

"Well, no. They generally mess in their own room, but the architect made provision for such a room here, and we utilize it," the Colonel replied.

"Do you consider this the better method?" was again asked.

"I am hardly competent to express a definite opinion just yet. It has the advantage, however, of enabling the men to keep their rooms cleaner and is also more convenient."

The officers' apartments were next investigated. The ante-room is nicely furnished and carpeted. The mess room is fitted up with an extension table capable of accommodating twenty-four officers. Above this room sleeping apartments have been furnished for fifteen attached officers, each one being given a separate room, and all fitted up with table, bureau, bed, wardrobe and washstand and other conveniences which make them very comfortable looking. The west wing was next gone through, but only one or two of the rooms there have been furnished.

On entering the museum the party were treated to a couple of airs on the piano by Pte George Shields, who is the musical director of the corps' minstrel troupe.

THE STRENGTH OF THE CORPS.

"How many men have been enlisted up to date, Colonel?"

"Forty-seven, but we have also two sergeants attached. On Monday the attached force will be increased to about thirty-five, six or seven of whom will be officers."

"How long is the term of instruction?"

"The regular course extends over three months, but we also have a special one, which may extend any period between seven days and the regular one. This latter is for those who have already made themselves proficient in the discipline, but who desire to take advantage of the lectures in order to enable them to pass their examinations."

"You propose to increase your regular force to 100 do you not?"

"Yes; just as soon as possible. I have been particular to receive only men of first-class physique, standing at least five feet eight, and of good chest measurement, for there are not many of us and it is well to present as creditable an appearance as possible on parade."

The reporter was in the act of thanking Colonel Smith for his kindness and taking his departure when he was invited to look at the cells for refractory red coats.

"Of course you will hardly ever require these?" was remarked on entering the main door.

"We have one of them in use now," was the reply. "A couple of months ago a deserter from the North-West Mounted Police gave himself up, and he is now confined here awaiting orders from the Department."

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF THE COMMANDANT.

Colonel Smith is an experienced and painstaking officer, and has been connected with the Canadian Militia for the last thirty years. He commenced his military career as a private in the Cobourg Rifle Company, but was afterward transferred to the 40th battalion. When "C" company was organized he was appointed captain, which position he held until he was promoted to the school in this city. By virtue of his position he was then gazetted lieutenant-colonel. He saw service in the North-West rebellion with "C" company and was a portion of the time Assistant Adjutant-General to the North-West field force. Col. Smith won laurels for himself while connected with the Toronto school. He is an enthusiastic soldier and spares no pains to impart instruction to those attending the school. While he adheres strictly to discipline, even to the minutest details, he still has a fascinating and kindly disposition which makes him universally popular with all under his command. No doubt the London military cadets will soon be placed in the first rank of proficiency under his direction, and the militia of the western district are to be congratulated on the wisdom of the Government in making this appointment.

A FINE-LOOKING BODY OF MEN.

"The non-commissioned officers and men of the permanent force," the *FREE PRESS* article concludes, "are a splendid-looking lot of young fellows, of fine physique and pleasing countenances. Already a healthy spirit of emulation, as to who shall be the best conducted on the streets, as well as in the barracks, seems to have possessed them, and they promise to be worthy citizens of London."

THE SEVENTH FUSILIERS.

The annual meeting of the officers of the 7th Battalion was held at the Drill Shed Friday night, eighteen being in attendance. The report of the Finance Committee showed monetary matters in a flourishing condition, the balance of cash on hand being \$125. The appointment of August Andersen as bandmaster was confirmed, and it was resolved also to appoint a paid bugle-major at \$50 a year, an appropriation being made for that purpose. It was also decided to purchase some new bushies to make up a complement of 300. The time for commencing drill was set down for the middle of April. The following committees were struck: Finance—Major A. M. Smith, Capt. Butler and Capt. Tracy. Regimental—Major J. B. Smyth, Capt. Beattie and Lieut. Byrne. Band—Major Gartshore, Capt. McKenzie and Lieut. Hytenrauch. Mess—Major A. M. Smith, Surgeon Niven, Lieut. Fraser and Lieut. Dillion. Special for reception of 5th Scots—Col. Williams, Major A. M. Smith, Major Gartshore, Capt. Beattie and Capt. Peters. Special for purchase of bushies—Major J. B. Smyth, Capt. Tracy, Lieut. Byrne and Lieut. Bazan. Rifle—Capt. Tracy, Lieut. Hutchinson, Lieut. Byrne and Lieut. Rayne.

Toronto.

THE FUNERAL of the late Robert Stobo, which took place at Scarboro', was attended by a large concourse of friends, who came to pay the last tributes of respect to one whose loss is keenly felt by all. Deceased came to his death from a severe attack of cold, which brought on congestion of the lungs. During the Fenian raids of '66 and '67 he served his country as lieutenant in the Scarboro' company of volunteers, now known as No. 1 of 12th York Rangers. Much sympathy is expressed for his sorrowing wife and family.—*Empire*.

CANADIAN ARTILLERY ARMAMENT.

At the last meeting of the Dominion Artillery Association at Ottawa, the Governor-General made a speech, a speech from which I wish to take an extract or two. His Excellency referred to a subject of great importance to the Canadian artillery, meaning thereby "the recent appointment by your government of a central defence committee, to which a great body of important questions concerning the safety of the Dominion is to be referred. * * I need not say that those problems, more especially in so far as they have reference to our coast defences, closely concern the artillerymen of Canada, and I shall be surprised if the labours of the Committee do not bring into additional prominence the value of your arm and the importance of maintaining for it a high condition of efficiency."

I trust that the authorities will not give His Excellency an opportunity of being surprised; he knows that the high condition of efficiency which he desires is not to be attained by feeding garrison gunners on antiquated, storeless guns.

At the time of the withdrawal of the Imperial troops, Canada was made a free gift by the English authorities of their existing armaments, which included ten 7-inch B. L. R. guns—that was about 1871. Since then, excluding field guns, we have purchased or have had presented to us four 40-pr. B. L. R. and twenty-nine guns of all other descriptions. A truly noble showing—three guns a year and some of these were presents.