

Both sides arrived at this point at the same time, and the defenders had no time to take up a definite position. Under the circumstances by far the best position for the defence was the open ground on which the battle was concluded. On such an open field of fire no attack, unless of overwhelming strength, could hope to succeed. But on the other hand, if this had been done there would not have been so much instruction for the men, for the proceedings of the day, if taken to heart, form a splendid lesson of the uselessness of authorized drill formations in difficult country. Troops must be pushed in when required, and whatever value authorized formations may have, yet they cannot be rigidly adhered to. But the most glaring faults lay in the utter want of control and fire discipline among the smaller units and the use of too extended formations for the units behind the firing line.

There could not have been a better lesson for impressing on those who look back on the events of the day, of the vast importance in modern war of the high training of the company and smaller units in fire discipline and control. The school for the men is the company, and the importance of company training is every day growing greater and greater, and is even nowadays of greater importance than battalion training, which is really only a school for officers. But the most common and fatal mistake made in both company and battalion training is the separation of musketry from drill. In all drill when firing takes place the rules for musketry practice should be rigidly adhered to, even to naming the range and the objective, and the sectional commanders should see that the men do actually aim and fire as ordered, for habits for good or bad become a second nature, and if men are not made to aim and fire properly in peace trainings they will not do so in war.

In offering this criticism we feel convinced that this large body of officers and men, who have achieved so much already, and who go to so much personal trouble and expense, and so willingly give up their time and pleasure in order to qualify themselves as far as possible in their duties as defenders of their country, will be anxious to draw all the useful lessons possible from their work; and we have no doubt that the great crowd of onlookers were in a very large measure responsible for the want of "fire control" and the men getting out of hand. It will be for the officers to decide how best to counteract these faults and difficulties another time. We heartily congratulate the 2,000 men taking part in the day in having set so praiseworthy an example, and to the militia in other parts of the country we say, "Go and do thou likewise."

Topics of the Week.

As will be seen by the report in another place in this issue, an unfortunate mistake occurred in connection with the telegraphic match between the London and Victoria teams of the permanent force, the effect of which is to leave the relative skill of the marksmen undecided, but to give the victory to D Co. at London, their opponents failing to comply with the stipulated conditions. A team from D Co. has since engaged in another telegraphic competition, this time with B Co. of St. Johns, Q., and the Londoners were again successful. Though the permanent corps can scarce be expected to take part in the military rifle league telegraphic matches proposed for next season, they might get up a match between themselves on similar principles.

A Toronto rifleman, whose letter appears in our correspondence columns, writes very feelingly on the subject of the threatened closing of the Garrison Common ranges. We believe he expresses the sentiments of the great majority of the riflemen of that city, who being but a small body proportionately, seem to have almost lost hope of continuing much longer to hold their ground against the strong attack upon it made by the Exhibition Association, backed up, as the latter is, by the Mayor and many other citizens of like importance. The newspapers are a unit in favour of closing the range, and nearly every one had an editorial article on the subject for Sir Adolph Caron's perusal during his stay in Toronto last week. The Minister then visited the range, and had the

situation explained to him. Strong pressure was brought to bear on each side; the riflemen being represented by a deputation of officers introduced by Lt.-Col. Denison, M.P., who pointed out how the range might be made safe beyond doubt. Sir Adolphe promised to carefully consider their representations, and we have no doubt that he will do all in his power to befriend the riflemen. One safeguard for them is that the Infantry School and the proposed School of Cavalry will year by year more urgently feel the need of a rifle range in their immediate vicinity, for indications are not wanting that thorough practical training in the use of the rifle must shortly be undertaken by the schools.

Just indignation is expressed by the *Charlottetown Examiner* at an insinuation of wrong doing on the part of the riflemen of that city, published in the shape of an anonymous interview in an Ottawa paper. Possibly the interviewer added to what he was told, for "an Ottawa rifleman" was not alone in expressing surprise at the high total achieved by the Charlottetown twenty, and it is to be hoped that it was unwarrantably he was made to add doubt to his surprise. We have received perhaps a dozen letters from riflemen in various parts of Canada, who express themselves astonished at the shooting strength in Prince Edward Island this match was the means of revealing; for while the skill of those Islanders who come to Ottawa has always been such as to command wholesome respect for their prowess, it was commonly thought that they constituted about the sum total of the marksmen, and that in a competition where teams of twenty were called for the Islanders could scarce be in the race. The recent match has been an eye-opener, however. As for the total, an average of almost 85, we believe that, creditable as it is, it will have to be exceeded by the team winning the next match of the kind, for the Charlottetown men alone appear to have been favoured with satisfactory shooting weather on this occasion.

The Rifle.

Permanent Corps Telegraphic Matches.

Several of our contemporaries have stated that in the skirmishing match between "C" Battery, R.C.A., at Victoria, B.C., and "D" Company, I.S.C., at London, the former made 1485 points and the latter 1023, and that "D" Company was therefore beaten in the match. It now appears, however, that the victory was the other way, for while "D" Co. used the D.R.A. regulation skirmishing target, which is only thirty inches deep and six feet wide, and has only bull's eye, centre and outer, the Battery used the 2nd class target, which is six feet square, and has bull's eye, inner, magpie and outer.

The challenge was thrown out by Major Peters, of "C" Battery, and was published in our issue of 26th September last. The conditions then stipulated were: "The teams to consist of thirty officers, non-commissioned officers and men, under command of the Major of the corps. Dressed in drill order, they will first parade in extended order at 400 yards, at the ready. The target will appear, to remain up for 90 seconds, during which time the team may get in as many shots as they can, under direction of the officer in command. The target will then be lowered for 18 seconds, and during this time the skirmishers may advance, as the officer directs, till the target again appears for 90 seconds, when the firing will be repeated until it again disappears; and after 18 seconds it will appear for a third exposure of 90 seconds duration. The score will then be taken. The firing may be done in any position. The size of the target to be that prescribed by D.R.A. rules. The commanding officer to be permitted to carry any army revolver and use it to the best advantage. Two officers to be in the butts, and the commandant of the garrison to be present at the counting of the hits and score."

This challenge was given to the whole permanent force, but "D" Co., I.S.C., was the only one to take it up. The match was fired, by arrangement, on Oct. 28th, with the foregoing result. So far as "D" Co. is concerned the terms of the challenge were strictly adhered to, as can be verified by Lt.-Col. Smith, D.A.G., Lt.-Col. Aytmer, B.M., and Capt. Wadmore, who were all in the butts and kept the time and counted the hits and points; also by Surgeon Hanavan, who was with the firing party from start to finish. The Battery, however, through some misadventure used the large target. Capt. Young, who accepted the challenge on behalf of "D" Co., and according to the conditions commanded its team, now claims the match.

On Saturday, the 2nd November, a telegraphic match took place between "B" Co., I.S.C., St. Johns, and "D" Co., London, on a challenge from the former, with eight n. c. o. and men on a side, ranges 100, 300 and 400 yards, 7 shots at each range, standing at 200, kneeling at 300, and lying down at 400, and was won by "D" Co. with a score of 577 to 446.