

## THE NATIONAL RIFLE ASSOCIATION.

(From the U. S. Army and Navy Journal.)

## MEETING OF THE DIRECTORS.

The eleventh annual meeting of the board of directors of the National Rifle Association was held at 184 Broadway, on Tuesday, Sept. 3. The meeting was called to order at 4 p. m. In the absence of the President, Major George Moore was called to the chair. Present Messrs. Wingate, Peck, Woodward, Shaler, Smith, Harding, Powell, Squire. The Secretary stated that he had received a letter from the Secretary of War returning thanks for the offer of the use of the range for the small arms board, and stating that the communication would be referred to that board for action. A letter from Captain Prince, U. S. A., in regard to the necessary height for embankments, was also read, together with a letter from the adjutant of the Seventy-first Infantry, N. G. stating that the regiment proposed to join the organization in a body, and requesting that they might be the first to have the privilege of shooting on the ground. The treasurer's report was then read, showing receipts for August to be \$6,247, disbursements \$6,235.95, balance on hand \$100.11. The treasurer also stated that since making this report he had received the subscription of Company F, Twenty-second regiment, \$102.50, together with \$5 in addition, making the total sum in hand \$212.55. On motion the treasurer's report was received and referred to a special auditing committee, consisting of Messrs. Harding, Partridge, and Powell.

The committee on fitting up the range reported that having found it would be necessary to clear off the fences and piles of stone which obstructed the premises; they had obtained an offer from a contractor in Flushing, who demanded fifty cents a running foot for the work which would make an aggregate of \$1,500. The committee deeming this extortionate, had concluded an arrangement with Mr. Poppenhausen on behalf of the railroad, by which he agrees to clear off the fences, stones, and all brush less than eight inches in diameter, on condition that that he be paid thirty cents a cubic yard for whatever embankments may be required for the pool targets, being a short embankment contemplated to be made and not included in his former contract. By this arrangement the committee are of opinion that the cost of clearing off the fences etc. will not exceed the sum of \$300.

The secretary stated that the printing of the manual had been completed, and presented with an advance copy to the board.

## CANADIAN RIFLE PRACTICE AND RANGES.

The following report from the committee appointed to visit the Canadian ranges was then read.

To the directors of the National Rifle Association.

The committee appointed to investigate the subject of Canadian rifle practice would respectfully report that they have completed the duties assigned to them, having spent from Saturday 17th inst., to Tuesday, 27th in Canada.

Their first visit was at Fort Erie, upon Col. Thomas C. Scoble, the Secretary of the Ontario Rifle Association, who not only gave them all the information in his power, but provided them with many valuable forms and blanks. Colonel Scoble also accompanied the committee to Toronto and exhibited to them the manner in which

the range at that city is laid out and operated. He also very kindly telegraphed their arrival, so that the committee were met at the range by a number of the most celebrated shots of Hamilton and Toronto, who gave an exhibition of their skill both with the Snider and Metford. The committee then proceeded to the storehouse of the Association, and afforded every opportunity of carrying out the object of their visit.

The committee then proceeded to Montreal and made a thorough examination of the range at Point St. Charles, which was then being fitted up for the match of the Quebec Rifle Association, which commenced on Tuesday last. The committee are under obligations to Colonel Fletcher, the Secretary, who showed them over the range, and gave them a full explanation of the method pursued by him, together with a copy of his forms, etc. They are also indebted to Messrs. Esdaille, Fairbanks, Capt. Cannon, and other gentlemen interested in rifle practice, from whom they obtained much information.

During their visit they saw some of the crack small bore shots practising at 1,000 yards, and as they remained in Montreal during the first day of the match they had an opportunity of witnessing the range in practical operation.

The advantages of this visit have been very great in giving a practical acquaintance with many important details. While it would take up too much time to go into any extended report, the committee present the following as a brief synopsis of the most important points observed by them.

I. The committee found no range in Canada which was equal in appearance to that belonging to the Association. They all however, possess the great advantage of having water behind them, and can thus escape the expense of the high embankment which we have to construct.

II. While opinions differed as to the height required for the embankment, to secure safety, the opinions of those whose experience in drilling new recruits in rifle practice made their conclusions the most valuable, were that 30 feet would be sufficient. To avoid all question, however, your committee would recommend that they be raised ten feet, so as to make them thirty five feet in height.

III. At Toronto the marking was partly by Hill's side system (as shown at page 119, Wingates Manual) and partly by the sunken pit (shown at page 121) the latter being preferred. At Montreal the former system was used entirely. Both systems have their advantages, and both their disadvantages. Your committee are of the opinion that where wide targets are used at long ranges the pit system, is preferable, and at the smaller targets, the side system is preferable particularly where it can be made with one side open. The double system of mantlet on the Hill system is not at all recommended.

IV. Two markers are placed in each butt, one to be a check on the other. These in all cases must be cool steady men; boys are useless. In Canada a detail, including a mounted orderly, is furnished from the garrison troops under the command of an officer, who not only act as markers, but perform such other fatigue duty as may be required. They are furnished with tents, and camp on the ground till the end of the match. As the Association pays the men one dollar a day, and they get off from drill, the soldiers are very glad to go. In addition the care-taker of the range is paid by the

government. The committee feel satisfied that a similar detail can be obtained from the troops stationed in this vicinity, through the War Department, and they would recommend that an immediate application be made for that purpose.

V. The regulation military arm of Canada is the Snider. This is a good gun, accurate up to 700 yards; but as far as the committee could see, the gun itself possesses no advantages over the Remington. At the same time, as the sights are finer and the trigger-pull but six pounds, as against the ten or twelve pounds of the Remington or Springfield, it is easier to make better shooting with it. The Martini-Henri, having a better barrel, heavier charges, and smaller bore, shoots better at long ranges than the Snider; the sights are also good and very accurate. The committee regret that they did not see any practice with this rifle. One of those sent over to Toronto from England was taken down to the range, but it was found that the rifle was of one issue, while the cartridges accompanying it were of another, and it could not be used. For long ranges and where military rifles are not required, the Metford rifle is almost universally used, and seems a most admirable weapon. It is a muzzle loader, with a pistol stock, weighing a little less than ten pounds, forty six calibre, with a very shallow groove. Charge—ninety grains of powder; ball of hardened lead and peculiar pattern, weighing 530 grains. A wad is used on top of the powder, made of felt, soaked in oil, which cleans the barrel after every shot. The bullet is patched with smooth thin paper, and is made a trifle smaller than the bore, so as to pass down easily. The back sight is a peep or aperture sight hinged on the small of the stock, well forward, and has a silver-plated scale on the side, on the Vernier principle, divided into degrees, minutes and seconds, and worked with a screw on top, so that an exact elevation can be obtained. The opening in the aperture sight can be increased or diminished. The front sight moves from right to left by a screw; having a scale in front; each dimension is two minutes, representing two inches on the target at 100 yards; 100 at 500 yards, etc. This is known as a wind gauge, and is moved so as to make the allowance that may be required without removing the sight from the bull's eye. On the rear of the sight is a small spirit level to enable the marksman to judge if his piece is horizontal. The front sights proper consist of a pin with a hollow head, a semicircle with a split in the centre, besides numerous others more or less complicated. By the use of these elaborate sights, together with great care in loading, and the gun, in addition, having a very low trajectory (the elevation at 1,000 yards being about 2 deg. 20 min.) very accurate shooting is made, your committee having seen four bull's-eyes made in five shots at 1,000 yards, the bull's eye being three feet square. As this rifle will be introduced at our matches by quite a number of Canadians who will be present it is hoped that something of American manufacture may be produced to equal it. The committee submit with their report samples of the different kinds of ammunition they found in use.

VI. The following is a sketch of the manner in which the Rifle associations of Canada are organized.

The Government in Canada appropriates annually \$10,000 for the encouragement of rifle practice generally, and \$5,000 for the reward of the best company battalion and district shots in the ranks of the volunteers. The grant of \$10,000 is distributed first, to