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A NOVEL RIFLE Competition.

Note and Comment.

We are requested to call the attention of those League team captains who have not yet forwarded their contributions to the fund for a well-deserved testimonial to the Secretary and organizer, to the fact that the committee desire to proceed with the matter without further delay. We fancy a reminder is all that is necessary to ensure prompt action.

The "Honour and Glory Match" is what in India they call the simultaneous rifle match similar to those we have had experience of in Canada. There it is an annual event, and this year's was fired on the 20th of September. Several reports to hand singularly enough omit to give any details of the ranges, shots, or strength of teams, but as the scores ranged from 921 to 488 for the eighty-eight teams competing, it is probable that the teams were of ten each, and the ranges 200, 500 and 600, with 105 as the H. R. S. The Martini was the weapon generally used. Appropriately, the highest scores was made by the representatives of the School of Musketry, whose practice proved almost as good as their precept might be expected to be. It is interesting to compare the top scores with those recorded on the occasion of the concluding match of this season's series here, when averages of 94.6 and 92.4 were put to the credit of the Snider.

The oft-discussed subject of the misapplication of time and energy in connection with the training of those corps of our militia unable to drill at headquarters, will be found treated of in an interesting manner in a contributed article appearing in this issue. We fancy there will be very general sympathy with the idea advanced or reiterated that the presence in camp of the full strength of the companies is not a necessity in order that the officers and non-commissioned officers may be taught campaigning duties. A great part of the instruction attempted to be imparted to the privates during the ten days in camp could be much more effectively given at battalion or company headquarters; and were expense of maintenance and transport thus avoided the saving would go far towards the extra expense involved in annual drill of the whole force. The Mother Country plan of a capitation grant based upon efficiency, if tried, would perhaps have a good effect.

Our Militia: Its Weakness; And How to Cure It.

In taking up a subject like this, it is absolutely necessary to consider the Political situation as well as the Military. It is undeniable that our people do not want, and will not have a standing army. They do not want any more expense than at present, and many of them grumble as it is, saying that there is very little to show for it. We have not, in spite of after dinner speeches, &c., any very deep military feeling, as many a militia officer can corroborate to his cost. But I believe we have, and could cultivate a genuine wish to have our Militia in such shape that if called upon to defend ourselves we would be a credit to English tradition. Any one who manages men in business knows that the obtaining of workmen is much easier than the training of a staff. Take a staff thoroughly competent and they will mould men to the work in a very short time; while the training of a staff is the work of years. The same is true of the art of War.

Given a battalion in which the officers and non-commissioned officers know their work, and the men are recruits who have never seen a rifle: at the end of a week you could move them; at the end of a month you could take them into action. Given the reverse, you would not be able to move them under a month, nor fight under six months. Besides which discipline would be nowhere when every man felt that he knew at least as much as his officers. And after all discipline, whether it be fire drill or barrack room, is the key note to success in war; the, for the time being, surrendering to one executive head the power to guide your mental and physical force against that of the enemy.

Now let us take a brief look at our militia. We find that officers and men are called out every second year for twelve days. They learn to march in fours sufficiently well to route march. And they fire 20 rounds of ammunition apiece without much more instruction than is necessary to load and fire a shot gun. There is neither time nor ammunition to teach volley firing—the only firing worth using in the field. The non-commissioned officers have no time or chance to practise their work, in fact a subaltern officer is lucky if he gets a dozen chances to drill his half company. And as for interior economy, it is hardly attempted.

These battalions are not called out again for two years. When they are it is generally with a different lot of men, the others having drifted away in the interim. Now what is to be expected under the circumstances? A race of born soldiers could do nothing on such terms. A great many people may doubt the expediency of having a militia, and may even be rather pleased than otherwise at its condition: but if we are to have a militia let it be a good one, better than any other in the world to-day, or throw it bag and baggage overboard.

What are the points to be aimed at in our militia system?

1. It is absolutely necessary that those who take on themselves the responsibility of officers should not only know thoroughly their own duties, but be thoroughly up in the duties of every grade below them, as they will be called on to teach their own non-commissioned officers and men in every little detail. Not only that, but the obtaining a high state of discipline in a short time makes it imperative that they cause their subordinates to realize their superiority, which a good non-commissioned officer will rapidly acquire over a man who otherwise may be his mental, physical and financial superior.

2. The having enough of such trained officers and non-commissioned officers to fully officer all the men we could put in the field.

3. The organization of efficient brigade staffs for every group of three or four battalions.

4. The doing of this in such a manner that no extra expense will be incurred.

Now all this can be done without saying by your leave to Parliament. The Militia Department have full power.

To begin with, give every officer and non-commissioned officer, who will come to the schools and pass, the pay of his rank plus the field allowance which he would be entitled to if called out for any other active service.