

soon produce a naval militia along the Canadian lake shores, and the inland cruisers would not be without value to the Royal Navy. The lake fights in 1812 showed that naval actions on the lakes are attended with peculiar conditions which do not prevail on the high seas.

It is difficult to understand Sir Charles Tupper's objections to the principle of Canadian contribution towards the maintenance of the Royal Navy on the ground that Canada would be doing her share by subsidizing a line of fast steamships under the control of the admiralty in the case of war. Does the High Commissioner imagine that converted cruisers would be any defence for our shores? The big Cunarders might be made useful commerce destroyers, but they could not stand a fight with a real cruiser of the smallest class for five minutes in the event of war. Canada will need vessels to defend her coast that can stand hard knocks, but will have little need for privateers.

CORRESPONDENCE.

Lee-Metford Cartridge.

To the Editor of CANADIAN MILITARY GAZETTE:

Your issue of 15th September contains an interesting article from the *Army and Navy Gazette* on the Lee-Metford .303 bullet, which states that the Geneva convention forbids the slitting of the points of bullets. Another military paper distinctly declares to the contrary, that there is nothing in the articles of the Geneva convention or in the declaration of St. Petersburg of 11th December, 1868, against the use of the Snider bullet or any shaped bullet slit at the point, but that the articles of said documents clearly refer to miniature shells, or any explosive bullet under 400 grammes (14 ounces) charged with pulminate or other explosive or inflammable substance. What is the Snider bullet but a shell minus the explosive compound, which does not bring it under the convention, hence the slitting of the Lee-Metford bullet is not forbidden. The results of the investigations being conducted at Dum Dum in India with five kinds of .303 bullets will be awaited with interest. The non-slipping power of this bullet has been proved not only in the Chitral campaign, but Capt. Morris Newman, in his account of the Metabele war, states that Capt. Williams, after employing his Lee-Metford magazine, took to his revolver, and was killed by the very natives he had shot with that rifle; and the fact that sportsmen in India, who seem to favor

the Lee-Metford, will not think of using it without first slitting the points of the bullets, clearly shows its inefficiency for stopping the charges of cavalry which events may prove not to be things of the past. The Boers used explosive bullets in the Transvaal war, clear proof of which was the explosion of one after passing through the body of Lieut. Romilly, and the effects shown of wounds received by one troop at Amajaba hill. The .303 cartridge is now being successfully manufactured at the Dominion Cartridge Factory at Quebec, and charged with cordite. From the ill effects of that explosive on the bore of the rifle from erosion and fouling, it might be suggested that the authorities could, with good reason, institute a series of scientific experiments with this cartridge loaded with Rifleite, which, it appears, causes no such ill effects on the bore, and gives as high a muzzle velocity as cordite. Thus for the above reasons the use of rifleite would be a big item of economy when the life of the Lee-Metford rifle is considered. Nor are we bound to use cordite because the imperial government does so, when rifleite, it appears, is conceded to be the better and more economical explosive. Moreover, by the recent debates in the House of Commons the use of cordite does not seem yet to be a settled matter. The points of our bullets can be easily slit, but as the terms of the above mentioned convention seem to be a moot [subject, possibly one of your readers may know where to lay hands on a copy, and give us the benefit of his knowledge, and probably corroborate the assertion made in the premises.

W., CAPT. R. L.

Rifle Practice Necessary.

To the Editor of CANADIAN MILITARY GAZETTE:

That the reforms announced in the Hon. A. R. Dickey's recent speeches may shortly be fully realized is the earnest hope of every well-wisher of our militia. Armed with the Lee-Metford and equipped with serviceable accoutrements, there would be a strong incentive to aspire to a higher standard of efficiency. The highest military authorities declare, "that to win battles, you must teach in peace what would have to be done in war." The experience of recent campaigns has established, beyond the shadow of a doubt, the overwhelming superiority of the bullet over the bayonet. With the advent of the new rifle, it might not be out of place to inquire whether the instruction imparted in our military schools is of the kind best calculated to meet the requirements of modern conditions of war? It may seem rank heresy to those imbued with traditions of the "thin red line" and "bayonet charge," that "fire is every thing, the rest is of small account." Why waste our best energies in rehearsing the antiquated manoeuvres of the barrack square, while at the same time neglecting the vitally important training

of the rifle range? Is it because the former admits of greater display? It is only by practical training on the rifle range that a man can acquire the requisite confidence and skill with the rifle to constitute him an efficient soldier. Surely, the experts who are entrusted with the guidance of military affairs can not have considered the matter in the light of modern experience, or they would have discovered the hopelessness of a man ever becoming an efficient shot on an annual expenditure of twenty cartridges. We therefore look to the government for an increase in the annual allowance of ammunition, and we also look to the head of the militia department for such reforms in the system of military training as are necessary to promote the general efficiency of the force.

I do not wish to say anything detrimental or that might tend to lessen public confidence in the military schools, for I believe they are an absolute necessity in our present scheme of defense; but I look upon them as schools in the literal sense, and as such, doubtless, if given the opportunity, they would become distinguished centres of training in all that go to make the practical, efficient soldier of to-day.

As for the permanent force, it should serve as a model in drill, discipline and marksmanship to the active militia, but unless the government see fit to increase the annual allowance of ammunition and afford every facility for practice, I cannot see how it can ever hope to attain the necessary degree of confidence and skill with the rifle to even become efficient, much less a model of marksmanship. It would increase the usefulness of the permanent force if it could furnish qualified instructors to the active militia when assembled for training. This would also tend to promote such a feeling of comradeship between the permanent and active militia that the interests of one would come to be looked upon as the interests of the whole. The government, by granting free ammunition for the league matches, &c., has done much to encourage rifle practice, but it would be well to go a step farther and afford pecuniary aid to such associations as made special provision in their prize lists for the encouragement of recruits, beginners, and indifferent shots. In this way, the government, working through the agency of the rifle associations, would induce greater numbers of our young men to take up rifle shooting as a pastime, with the result that the country would soon possess a large force of expert riflemen, who in the "day and hour of danger" could be relied upon to render as effective service as the English archers of yore at Cressy and Agincourt.

Yours obediently,

I. R.

Hon. Mr. Dickey has ordered 1,500 Lee-Metford rifles and 800 Lee-Metford carbines for the Canadian militia.