

## Correspondence.

[This paper does not necessarily share the views expressed in correspondence published in its columns; the use of which is freely granted to writers on topics of interest to the militia.]

## OUR CRITICISM OF THE P. Q. R. A. EXECUTIVE.

EDITOR MILITIA GAZETTE,—On my return to town recently, your issues of the 9th and 16th August were handed me for comment.

Allow me to express satisfaction that you are interested enough in rifle shooting to criticise such matters in an intelligent manner, and that you do not hesitate to lay blame on any shoulders that you consider deserve it. However, I would add the old saying, "be sure you're right then fire ahead."

In brief. 1st, I consider the poor scores in military matches generally, and in those of the P. Q. R. A. in particular, arise simply from *neglect of practice*. 2nd, I am sure the P. Q. R. A. officers and committee carried out the *spirit* of their rules, if not the *letter* of the law.

Now, in further explanation, I would say that the Executive Officer allowed he made some mistakes in copying his return; *two* mistakes in the *deductions* and also the mistake of inverting the order of the volleys.

He must have credit for making such a correction, when the doubt was explained to him. Many of us fancy that similar mistakes by various officers have occurred in similar matches on other occasions, and have not been corrected. Competitors can also have this satisfaction, that the target scores were absolutely correct, having been doubly checked. Why were the scores so low, only one-half of the best hitting the target?

Because, most of those teams had not practised that kind of firing beforehand, and, as a matter of drill, were rusty. Teams enter and take part in such matches in a haphazard manner, then come to grief and grumble. If teams won't practise at home, let the Executive Officer drill them with a snap cap volley or two before commencing.

Fault is found with the word of command as too *quick*. My experience is that too *slow* a command is a much worse fault.

As to deductions, that is a matter of opinion, and the Executive Officer is probably less biased in his judgment than those interested. He said he could not carry out the letter of the law and so carried out its spirit to the best of his ability. You will find on examination that deducting three points instead of one point makes very little difference.

However, a suggestion has been made to classify volleys as good, bad and indifferent. How would you value these?

The hour of the competitors' meeting was posted for 24 hours and nobody asked that it should be changed.

I understand you ask for a "sympathetic nature" in a range officer; is not that a new qualification?

You do not seem to be quite consistent in complaining that the letter of the law was carried out on late comers and light triggers. There is surely little excuse for such faults. Large competitions must be carried out on time, and there is no excuse for a trigger  $1\frac{1}{2}$  pounds under pull, especially on a team. It is a rudimentary principle that a team captain sees that triggers are tested beforehand.

It is true, I have heard that the D. C. R. A. are not as particular in these matters as they used to be, but that is not a good excuse to plead in other matches.

In conclusion, let those interested assist in improvements in future, make practical suggestions and practise the manual and firing exercise beforehand; thereby they will materially help all who perform the duties of the Executive, as well as

THE STATISTICAL OFFICER.

## A PLEA FOR SIGHTING SHOTS.

EDITOR MILITIA GAZETTE,—Will you kindly allow me space in your valuable paper for a few remarks in connection with the D. R. A. meeting which has just closed.

I read in yours dated Sept. 6th that the D.R.A. was a great success and great satisfaction was expressed by competitors at the treatment accorded them. Now, Mr. Editor, it is quite clear you did not hear all the competitors express themselves. I suppose you will term me a "kicker," but I believe the day will come when the kickers will be classed where they belong and be entitled to the reverence due them. I am only echoing the sentiments of many who thought it was as well to say nothing but stay at home next time.

In the first place we suppose that all prize meetings are held as incentives to good rifle shooting and to make the soldiers of our country good shots. Let us look and see who fill our ranks? Is it only the rich, they who have time and money, who can work themselves up to a state of proficiency? I think not. There would be slim battalions were this the case. Then let us think how many are deprived of this needful practice who have to work hard every day to earn a livelihood, and yet

are our soldiers, our riflemen, who take for a holiday the D.R.A. meeting.

Now for the treatment awaiting them. To many the range is new, the rifle is new, perhaps some may have been on the range many times before, but they are out of practice, as business demands their attention when at home. Still they think a few shots on the extra series just before entering the match will give them an inkling as to the elevation and windage. The competitor finds on arriving there that a large crowd is pushing around an officer who is "timing" the tickets; at last he gets the officer's attention. When do you fire? he is asked. "At 9.30" is the reply. "Oh, I can't time you before 11 o'clock." He is then timed, of course 11 o'clock, and goes away in disgust. This is my experience in the matter and many others to my knowledge as well. I carried an extra series ticket the first two days, and even then got no chance to fire it preceding a regular match at the same range, waiting so long one day in hopes of getting a chance to fire that I came very near being ruled off for being late at the next match.

What are the extra series for? How can poor men who have sufficient money only to pay their board bill enter them half a dozen times or so in hopes of getting some valuable hints as to wind, elevation, etc., or beat some big score in order to get the last dollar in it. I claim they are more discouraging than anything else. Some remark that sighting shots take up too much time. Well, that to hang around on extra series for an hour or two is shorter than a few minutes taken, after once a competitor has taken up his position to fire in a regular match, is more than I can see, and no time during a meeting will a shot be of more value to him than just before commencing his score. All marksmen know that. If the great crack shots don't like sighting shots let them proceed on their score without them. Let there be fair play, but it is not fair play where some competitors have the privilege of shooting just before a regular match opens and their turn to shoot, and others have not. Some claim that sighters give increased advantage to old shots over younger and out-of-practice ones.

Mr. Editor, a bull's eye is a bull's eye and counts 5 and no more, and is as good a 5 for anyone making it. One striking instance of what sighters would have done for one competitor at the D. R. A. was that the first shot in every match that he shot (and he shot in all) his score commenced with an outer, except in two, these were one a magpie the other an inner. Another plea is, there are no sighters at Wimbledon. That is a poor excuse. Wait until we know we are going there, then let us practise without sighters. We can't all go to Wimbledon.

Give us the old system if the new one does not do. If it takes up too much time give us a less number of matches with more prizes added. Let the average soldier win enough, if nothing more, to pay his board, or car fare. Hold out some encouragement for him. Let the big guns be content with three or four first prizes, and not eight or ten. Unless something like this is done, Mr. Editor, I think you will see in the near future less interest in rifle shooting and fewer competitors in Ottawa.

KICKER.

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R. McVITTIE,

226 Robert St., Toronto, Ont.