

Canada has not up to the present felt disposed to expend the money necessary for the full development of this or any other system for providing adequate defence.

A rural battalion of infantry is to be established in the Province of Manitoba, consequent on the disbandment of the 91st Battalion, of Winnipeg City. Mr. S. L. Bedson, Warden of the Stoney Mountain Penitentiary, who was junior Major of the disbanded corps, will be Lieut.-Colonel commanding the new corps, which will also be styled the 91st. There is considerable military ardour in the province, and with an enthusiastic and capable officer such as Mr. Bedson would be at its head, the new battalion should have a successful career.

Major Bedson is naturally a soldier, having, we believe, first seen the light of day with the 16th (Imperial) Regiment of Foot, in which his father was a colour-sergeant. A recent act of kindness on his part has set all the newspapers going about his early career. He passed through Eastern Canada last week on his way to Ireland, whither he is escorting Morris Blake, who for twenty years has been locked up for killing a comrade in the 16th Foot when that regiment was stationed at Montreal in 1868. The occurrence took place in the Victoria Barracks, on St. Paul Street. Blake was a Private, and had had some trouble with a Sergeant Bourne. Entering the sleeping room of the barracks, he slipped a cartridge into his rifle and hastily fired at another sergeant, whom he supposed at a hasty glance to be his enemy, Bourne. He missed his mark, but the bullet struck three men who were romping on one of the cots. It passed through the arm of one man named Winters, then through the body of another, named English, and finally wounded in the leg a third, named Jamieson. English died immediately. Blake was tried by court martial and sentenced to be shot, but the decision of the court was overruled by the higher military authorities, it being ordered that he should be handed over to the Civil Government for trial. He was then sentenced to imprisonment for life, and sent to Kingston Penitentiary. Young Bedson was then a colour-sergeant in Blake's company. When he left the service he obtained the post of Warden of the Manitoba Penitentiary. He had Blake removed there from Kingston a few years ago, and lately secured a reprieve, and in order that the unfortunate man should not get into bad hands on his re-entry into the world after twenty years' exile, he volunteered to escort him home to his boyhood friends in Ireland. He has, indeed, been a friend in need to his unfortunate fellow-soldier, who was a mere boy when he committed the terrible offence for which he has suffered.

### The New Wimbledon.

(Volunteer Service Gazette.)

It is, at any rate, now very likely that a site for the future prize meetings of the National Rifle Association has been found at Brookwood near the Pirbright ground which was so much talked about some years ago as the best substitute for Wimbledon. There are some questions, chiefly connected with financial considerations, to be determined, but subject to these the Council has definitely adopted the report of its Committee in favour of Brookwood. And we cannot say that any better site appears to be available. The Secretary for War is prepared to grant rights to the National Rifle Association of shooting over Government ground, which will undoubtedly help to facilitate operations, and although the journey from London is a long one, yet the proximity of the shooting ground to the railway station will to a certain extent neutralize the length of the railway journey. From the excellent sketch map which, by the kindness of the editor of the *Daily Telegraph*, we are enabled to reproduce to-day, it will be seen that the amount of ground which the association will necessarily have to acquire, that enclosed by the thick black line, is of no great extent, and ought not to be very costly. The ground on which the targets will be placed belong to the Government. There is another tract to the south west of the firing-points which is marked on the plan as "ground to be acquired," but it does not seem to us that its acquisition is absolutely essential. Even if it were built over it appears almost-impossible to believe that its inhabitants could main-

tain that any danger to their lives or property could possibly be incurred by the firing at the N.R.A. ranges as laid down on the plan. Mr. Hoey, the Clerk of the Works to the National Rifle Association, is of opinion, we believe, that only a very small amount of drainage operations will have to be undertaken in order to make the ground all that can be desired. Whether the *Mirage* of which we have heard so much will make itself severely obnoxious remains of course to be proved. But it must be remembered that we shall never get an ideal site, and that it is a great deal to secure a place for the N.R.A. meetings which is not extravagantly costly, which is practicably nearly as accessible from London as Wimbledon, and which will be what has been called "neutral" as regards the ranges, and which is, so far as we understand, absolutely safe and likely to remain so. Whether it may or may not be practicable at Brookwood to set out other ranges for general use, which would not interfere with those for the N.R.A. meetings, we do not know. If it should prove practicable the association might make its Brookwood site a profitable investment; but the first thing is to provide for a sufficiency of perfectly fair "neutral" ranges for its own meetings.

The London daily papers of Thursday almost all commented on the decision of the N.R.A. council on the previous day. On the whole, the comments were harmless, though perhaps not in all cases very germane to the matter in question. In particular there seems to be a very general impression that the immediate neighbourhood of Pirbright, where the Guards shoot, and even the more distant Aldershot, will by some unexplained "Wirkung in die Ferne" impress a more military character upon the meetings at Brookwood than those at Wimbledon could boast of possessing. Of course this is a mere delusion. The Brookwood meetings will be just as much and as little military as the Wimbledon meetings are; and as for that matter, the prize meetings of the Regular army at Aldershot are. It is certainly possible to imagine a "Musketry Camp," where soldiers, regulars or auxiliaries, might be put through certain exercises in field firing and the like—for which prizes might be given; while, at the same time, all camp duties might be performed by the assembled officers and men. But no "Rifle Association," whether it is the N.R.A. or the Army Rifle Association, can attempt to carry out a programme of the sort. Such a body must mainly depend upon the attractions it offers to individual shots, and those individual shots—whether they are regulars or volunteers—will not enter for competitions if they think that they are unfairly handicapped. And those of them who are obliged to perform camp duties will consider themselves unfairly handicapped if they have to compete with men who can afford to come from London (or Birmingham or Reading—for the argument is applicable to any site)—every morning. A rifle prize meeting can never be conducted on the same lines as a prize meeting for great guns, or on the lines of an ordinary camp where drill manoeuvres and camp duties must take the first place.

It is undoubtedly very much to be regretted that the public should have been so much misled as to the requirements and objects of the National Rifle Association. The association is, as we and others have said over and over again, not a teaching body directly, but an examining body; and in order to conduct its examinations fairly, the element of chance must be as much as possible eliminated. It will always exist to some extent, otherwise the N. R. A. would have but few entries, but it is not desirable to foster it by the introduction of many competitions in which luck has the principal share. Some people who do not understand the nature of those great prize meetings which the National Rifle Association has conducted so successfully for twenty-nine years, are naturally inclined to think that if they were entrusted with the management of affairs they could evolve something much more satisfactory, at least to themselves. Of such a class, Sir Edward Sullivan, who wrote a long letter, which was honoured with leaded type in the *Morning Post* last Thursday, is a notable example. But we still incline to believe that more reasonable people will retain their faith in the good sense of the experienced men who form the Council of the National Rifle Association and that the future meetings of that body, whether they are held at Brookwood, Churn or Cannock Chase, will be as successful as those which have taken place ever since 1860 on Wimbledon Common.

A New York paper's correspondent thus cables from London: A tremendous big thing in the way of a monster gun is being made. It is to be a 200-tonner, and is being made at the Woolwich arsenal. The special machinery required to lift it upon its carriage will cost quite \$110,000. Its projectile is to weigh two tons, and when it is mounted on some point of the English coast it is expected to drop into the sea 4,000 pounds of shrapnel every five minutes to a distance of fifteen miles. This will make an invasion more than ever a thing of the future, when the English channel can be swept from the shores nearly all the way to France. If things go on at this rate there seems to be no particular reason why London and Paris should not bombard each other direct by tilting the noses of their guns sufficiently into the air.