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Topics of the Week.

We would remind commanding officers and captains of regimental teams that the time for closing the entries for the Military Rifle League competitions is drawing near, and it behooves them to complete without undue delay their arrangements for participating in what is evidently going to be an important and exciting contest. Every corps in the Dominion should be represented in this friendly rivalry, and it is understood that the arrangements made are such that the crack shooting battalions cannot monopolize all the trophies.

This raises the question—which can be considered the crack shooting corps? There are a few regiments that can enter for a prize competition half a dozen first class shots, but how many even of these can put twenty, or even ten, shots of equal excellence into the field. It will probably be found that the season will develop much unexpected latent strength and weakness, and nobody need be surprised to see a comparatively dark horse canter in an easy winner. Consequently we hold that there is nothing in the prospects to prevent any battalion possessing a dozen fair, steady shots, from competing with an even chance of a creditable record, and the impetus to general proficiency in shooting which the competition promises will be sufficient reward for the trouble, independently of any prospect of prize winning.

One factor which may have a decided influence on the result, and which cannot be estimated beforehand, is winter practice with Morris tubes. During the past six months many of our militiamen have had opportunities of using this aid to out-of-door target practice, and these corps will undoubtedly be much stronger for this opportunity. Last year the Victoria Rifles, of Montreal, which had for some years previously fallen off as a shooting battalion, put into the field a very strong team, and they themselves attribute all their success to the tube practice which they had kept up during the preceding winter, and which enabled mere nursery shots to fairly hold their own with veterans

throughout the season. This winter many additional gallery ranges were established, and next winter it is to be hoped that every company headquarters in the country will be equipped with Morris tubes and their accessories.

There was a rumour early in the session that the Government, yielding to the pressure of the military representatives in Parliament, purposed to increase the militia grant sufficiently to allow the whole enrolled strength to drill annually, but there is yet no indication that so desirable a consummation will be actually reached. That some remedy for the present state of affairs is required is manifest, for it is becoming yearly more difficult to maintain rural corps on an efficient footing, and their officers are becoming discouraged. What with the uncertainty of being called out, the impossibility of securing the same men for successive camps, and the necessity of keeping back the partially trained men to the recruits' level, the outlook is not encouraging.

Captain Adaye, in his lecture on the drill and training necessary for the English volunteers, of which a synopsis appears in this issue, shows very distinctly what is desirable in the Old Country, and with a few adaptations the lecturer's arguments hold perfectly good for our Canadian militiamen. That no recruit should be passed into the battalion until he has completed a course of recruit drills; that no men should attend a camp until they have done some company drills, and that more time should be given to musketry instruction are propositions that our D.A.G.'s will heartily endorse, but is there a genius amongst them who can solve the problem of achieving these desiderata?

Our antipodean cousins are not afraid to pay their volunteer staff, as will be seen from the following item from the last issue of our enterprising exchange, the *Colonial Military Gazette* :—

"In comparison with the pay of officers of other branches, that of the officers of the N.S.W. Public Schools Cadet Corps appears to us to be excessive. All of them are amateurs, and their pay is as follows: Commanding officer, £586; staff officer, £550; adjutant, £500. We say that these rates are out of all proportion to those paid to officers holding very much more responsible positions, and to the worth of the services rendered. Even the sergeant-major gets £275, which is as much as a major in a British cavalry regiment receives. Eleven hundred pounds would be ample for division among the four, whereas they draw the tidy sum of £1,911. And for the £1,100 we would have got professionals into the bargain.

Armourer Sergeant Ronan, of the 12th Battalion, has invented a new style of Orthoptic which it is declared may be used in skirmishing as well as in ordinary matches, is always in position and does not need to be removed when not in use, as it does not interfere with the sight being in the corner of the eye instead of in front. Riflemen are referred to his advertisement in another column.