

support the minister of militia in the measures he can safely be counted upon to introduce for the benefit of the force.

The destruction of the old *Alert* at Quebec the other day by permission of the department of marine was an act of national vandalism for which there is no excuse. It is astonishing that an outcry was not raised to save the historical old craft from destruction, and it is not surprising that the British service papers express their indignation at the way the destruction of the British ship which had the honor of getting nearer to the north pole than any other vessel, was accomplished. The *United Service Gazette* contains a sample expression of indignation.

Our well-known contemporary remarks:

"It is not without a strong sentiment of regret that it is learnt that the *Alert*, one of the most famous of the many vessels that have been engaged in Arctic exploratory surveys, an historic ship, has sailed her last voyage and become the prey of flames—not accidentally, but intentionally applied. Purchased at auction for less than £1,000 from the Canadian government a few weeks ago by a ship-builder of Quebec, the *Alert* was beached on the Beauport shoals, in Quebec harbor, by her purchaser, and after being dismantled was fired for the sake of her old metal. There is a strong feeling that some better use could have been found for a vessel to which so many interesting memories attached. She came into possession of the Canadian government some ten years ago, when she was presented by the British authorities for use by Canada in exploring, with a view to ascertaining the practicability of the navigation of Hudson Straits. On this expedition she was caught in an ice-floe for nearly a month, but escaped serious danger.

"The *Alert* possessed the record of having anchored in lat. 82 deg., or nearer to the pole than any other ship. At this time she formed part of the Nares polar expedition of 1875 and 1876, and was commanded by Captain (now Admiral) Sir G. Nares. Her sister ship was the *Discovery*. For over four months the members of this expedition never saw the sun. They reached the grave of Capt. F. C. Hall, of the United States ship *Polaris*, and erected a memorial plate over it. The return of the two ships to Southsea gave rise in England to quite a national ovation. In 1883 the *Alert*, having been found so

well adapted for navigating the Arctic seas, was borrowed from the British admiralty and thoroughly refitted by the commission appointed in 1883 by the United States congress to arrange the expedition for the relief of Lieut. Greely and party. It is remembered that this was the expedition which reached Lieut. Greely and the survivors of his party when they were all on the point of succumbing to famine and cold, having subsisted for over a month on nothing but lichens and boiled strips of sealskin. The *Alert* was the supply boat of the expedition.

"The welcome that awaited her on her return to the United States, with the seven survivors and the bodies of the eighteen who had perished of Greely's party, will not soon be forgotten. Had the rescuing party arrived at Greely's headquarters a few hours later not one of them would have been found alive. Had the old ship been preserved as a relic of the past, it would have given satisfaction to many; and it is thought that the Canadian government might have found her a berth, for it is recognized that, after the experience gained in the case of the *Foudroyant*, no individual would have been likely to take up the *Alert* as a speculation."

We hope that it may not be too late yet to recover at least some of the metal fittings of the *Alert* as souvenirs of the brave old ship. Relics of the *Alert* would be well worthy a place in some of our numerous young yet promising public museums.

There has been an excellent illustration given in Montreal lately of the absurdity and injustice of some of the comparisons which the lay papers are so fond of making in connection with militia matters. A certain sensational paper, discussing the resignation of an officer from one of the local regiments, launched out into an invidious comparison between the present state of the gallant corps in question and its condition some years ago, the object being to indicate a falling off in the efficiency of the corps and to discredit the present commanding officer. All that it is necessary to say as to the justice of the comparison is to remark that officers and men of the regiment are alike indignant at the comparison. It has been hard work to keep the corps up to its high standard of efficiency, but that has been due to numerous retirements of officers

and non-coms such as take place in every regiment in the service some time or another. It is to be hoped that the papers will some day see that the ever recurring attempt to discuss the private affairs of regiments is as once ridiculous, unpatriotic and positively indecent, for they cannot have thorough information on the points they pretend to discuss.

Correspondence.

WOODSTOCK, Oct. 23, 1895.

To the Editor of MILITARY GAZETTE, Montreal:

Dear Sir.—In your issue of Oct. 15th, I notice a correspondence has sent you the names of the first Wimbledon team of 1873.

I have in my possession a photograph of the Canadian team at Wimbledon in 1871, and I have since interviewed one of the members of that team, one who was the father of rifle shooting in this district, and who had much to do with the organisation of a Canadian Wimbledon team.

I now enclose a letter and also a list of the names of some of those on the team which may be of interest to the readers of your valuable paper.

I remain, yours sincerely,

FRED. W. MACQUEEN,
Major 22nd Batt.

WOODSTOCK, Oct. 18, 1895.

My dear Major MacQueen.—As you have called my attention to an almost forgotten affair, allow me to say that the first suggestion of a Canadian representation at Wimbledon came from myself in the columns of my paper. It came to me in this way: our mutual friend Fortesque Graham, Esq., then resident in England, was good enough to send me in 1870 a small brochure—a highly interesting account of the experience and performance of an English team that had competed in Belgium. At that time, being an enthusiastic amateur shot and a member of the Dominion and Ontario Rifle Association, I brought the matter up at the meeting of the latter and was strongly supported by the late Col. Skinner of the 13th Batt. The idea was not encouraged by the president, who thought such a step should proceed from the Dominion Association. At the meeting in Ottawa, Col. Skinner and myself urged the project; on the strength of Col. Skinner's offer to raise the funds necessary for the expense of the team he was allowed to proceed. A circular emanated from the association, eschewing all responsibility as to expense submitted to the various Ontario local rifle associations, four names asking for a choice as to the gentleman who should take charge of the team and assume the responsibility. Col. Skinner, whose name stood second on the list, was a country gentleman and having made an offer of a most gracious