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The New System of Rifle Practice.

HAVING so often commented upon the lack of instruction in rifle practice in the permanent corps, it is with particular pleasure that we find ourselves this week in a position to congratulate the Militia Department upon at length taking steps to remove the deplorable weakness hitherto prevailing in this respect. In the Militia General Orders of the 1st of June, which will be found detailed elsewhere in this issue, a scheme of instruction and practice in rifle shooting is formulated for the non-commissioned officers and men of this corps. It is modelled after an English pattern, without due regard being had to the different conditions of its application there and in this country; and perhaps without sufficient attention having been given to details. The scheme, as it stands, is in our opinion not calculated to bring about the results its designers had in view, and it is safe to wager that experience will quickly suggest remodelling.

In future the men of the permanent corps are, having fulfilled certain conditions, to fire from 90 to 120 rounds annually, at distances varying from fifty yards to six hundred, the smaller number of rounds being for the smart men who are able at once to make passable shooting, and the extra thirty to be spent if necessary in training those who do not come up to the set standard.

First of all there will come position drill and firing with blank cartridges. The attack upon the target will be made at only fifty yards distance, and the soldier having, in a standing position, fired five rounds and made at least eight points, will then be considered qualified to proceed back to 100 yards; should he similarly qualify there he next tries 150, then 200, 400, and 500. If he succeed—with or without the help of the prescribed marginal allowance of ammunition—in making eight points in any series of five shots at each of these ranges, he will pass on to the second stage, and be further instructed; if he fail to make that number of points, his practice ends. That is where one of the defects of the scheme comes in. The man who fails in this simple first stage is the man most in need of further instruction and practice.

The second stage, for those only who qualify in the first, consists in firing from 10 to 15 rounds at 500 yards and, if twenty points have been scored, a like allowance at 600 yards. Those who can't score twenty points in fifteen rounds at 500 yards, shoot no more for a season; those who fall short of twenty points at 600 are checked there. Those who stand both tests pass into the third stage, and fire thirty rounds more at 200, 500 and 600 yards, ten each range.

The man who goes right through to the end of this programme will have acquired a fair insight into what hitherto were perhaps erroneously considered the mysteries of rifle shooting. But it is to be feared that

with the scheme laid down in the General Orders carried out to the letter, there will be comparatively few men who will ever get to the third stage. The system will hardly be satisfactory until provision is made for the further instruction of those who fail in the initial stage. Just as the soldier is drilled and drilled again until he attains machine-like exactness in the manual, he should be made to devote time and attention to rifle shooting until he has attained reasonable proficiency in that much more important branch of his military education.

Topics of the Week.

The Dominion Artillery Association have received official sanction for the holding of a garrison artillery competition at the Island of Orleans this summer, similar to that held last year. The time of holding will probably be about the middle of September. The practice programme of the field artillery men is detailed elsewhere in this issue.

The customary last hour changes in the Wimbledon team are in progress this week. Two members have dropped out—two "old reliables"—by reason of family affliction. These are the Mitchell brothers Lieut. "Bill," of the 32nd, and Pte. "Davy" of the 13th Battalion. Each of these has already been three times to Wimbledon. The next in order of the Sixty being called upon to fill the vacancies, Lieut. F. S. Vaughan of the Fifth Royal Scots promptly accepted; Capt. L. Thomas of the 54th, declined; Pte. C. H. Clarke, of the 53rd, having long ago intimated that he could not go, was passed over, and Capt. E. G. Zealand of the 13th Battalion, was next offered the last place, which he accepted. He was the twenty-seventh man on the list of those eligible. Major Anderson, 43rd Battalion, is now waiting man. There have thus been seven refusals. Capt. Zealand has never yet been across with the team. Lieut. Vaughan went in 1877 as a Sergeant in the Victoria Rifles; he subsequently retired from the force and gave up rifle shooting, but last year taking a commission in the Fifth Royal Scots he again appeared at Rideau range, and at once took a leading position.

The red-coated corps who—happily or unhappily, as you may feel inclined to view it—smelt powder in the North-West are to receive further distinction in consequence. After mature deliberation—two years, one paper says—the militia authorities have issued an order permitting the Tenth Royal Grenadiers to inscribe "Batoche" upon their colours; and a precedent has been hunted up to establish that the Fifteenth and Forty-fifth Battalions having each been represented by a company at the siege of that Half-breed stronghold, those battalions also are entitled to have the word emblazoned upon their colours. Similarly, the Governor-General's Foot Guards were represented at Cut Knife Hill by twenty of their sharpshooters, and by this rule become entitled to have their regimental colours bear the name of that engagement. And the Infantry School Corps would be entitled to bear both inscriptions upon their colours, when they get them, though the presentation has not yet been made. The Rifles are not allowed to have colours, and consequently don't share in this distribution of honours. It seems that there are only