

DOMINION RIFLE ASSOCIATION.

The formation of a National Rifle Association for Canada, similar to that established in Great Britain, was a thing much desired by all classes of our people, but more especially by the Volunteers, and when, agreeable to a suggestion made by the Militia Authorities, delegates assembled at Ottawa, for the purpose of inaugurating such an institution, much satisfaction was expressed and considerable good anticipated in the future of the movement. We, in common with the members of the Volunteer force, naturally supposed that, as the Association was apparently instituted under the sanction of the military authorities, and as the most prominent members of the force, from the different Provinces, were invited to attend its formation, it would be, to some extent, connected with the Militia or defensive organization of the Dominion. In conceiving this idea, however, we seem to have erred, at least, to a certain extent, for those who were entrusted with the formation of the Association adopted the principle—and we are not prepared to say they were wrong in so doing—that the object sought was not so much to make good marksmen of the Volunteers and Militia as to educate the whole mass of the people of Canada to a knowledge of the use of the rifle. In this they doubtless followed the precedent established by the National Rifle Association of England, which has long been regarded as an institution which has been of incalculable benefit as tending to elevate the military spirit of the people of Great Britain.

The adoption of the principle to which we have alluded above, was productive of some disappointment to several old and prominent members of the Volunteer force, who were delegates from their various districts, and were also members of the elected Council, and who naturally possessed a strong interest in promoting the military character of the enterprise. And we could not but agree, to a certain extent, with the remarks made by Lieut.-Colonel Brunell, at the meeting of the delegates at Ottawa. This officer considered, and there were several present who agreed with him, that the Volunteer element had been unduly neglected by the framers of the Constitution. However, rifle shooting is so essentially a portion of military science that little fear need be entertained of the Volunteer interest suffering at the hands or by the management of the Council of the Association. The object sought, is one which will doubtless receive the support of both Government and people, but there can be no doubt but its ultimate success mainly depends upon the support given to it by the Volunteers and Militia, and to secure that support being cordially given, the Dominion Rifle Association should endeavor, as much as possible, to bring it within the sphere of the rank and file. In reference

to this, our correspondent, *A Prince Edward Volunteer*, whose letter appears in another column, is well worthy of consideration. The principal fault which he finds is that "this Association will be formed or composed of men of means, to the exclusion of the mass of non-commissioned officers and privates, whose pecuniary means will not allow them to travel far from their homes to another Province, or even to a distance in their own, together with the expenses of boarding and lodging for several days." This is an evil which we scarcely understand how the Association could remedy: the peculiar nature of our country being such as to require that each Province should participate in the benefits arising from the annual competition. A suggestion made by a member of the Council, gives an idea of how the poorer members of the force might be enabled to compete for prizes offered by the Association; this was in proposing to send a Canadian team to Wimbledon, which should be composed of the best shots in the first annual competition; the being sent to Wimbledon to be a prize offered by the Dominion Rifle Association, to such as proved themselves worthy of representing Canadian riflemen in England. In the same manner, companies, battalions, and local rifle associations, might offer the being sent to the Dominion Rifle Association meeting as a prize to their best marksmen. This, we apprehend, would be productive of much eager competition among their members.

There can be no doubt but our correspondent is pretty correct in his statements in reference to the superior facilities enjoyed by officers in acquiring a knowledge of the use of the rifle, but this is the accident of their position, and we are happy to see them so well improve the opportunities thus accorded. The men not having the same means at their command, it should be the object of the officers of each battalion and company to exert themselves in such a manner as to give their men the means and opportunity of becoming expert in the use of their special arm.

We have not as yet heard of any application being made to Government for a grant of money in aid of the Dominion Association, but such may possibly be in contemplation, and we think a few thousands of the public money could not be better applied. This need not necessarily prevent an appropriation to encourage target practice in companies and battalions.

As the Dominion Rifle Association is yet in its first infancy, it cannot be expected to come up to the standard of completeness which it will doubtless hereafter acquire, and, ardently wishing, as we do, that it may prove an entire success, we would bespeak for it a good support and fair trial. There are some errors which we could point out, committed at the formation of the Association, but, as they are of such a nature as to

work their own cure in no very long time we will pass them over in silence. The character and position of its promoters, and the earnestness with which they have undertaken their task, are good auguries of its success, and we hope the people in all parts of the Dominion will second their efforts in establishing a National Dominion Rifle Association.

THE UNITED STATES NAVY.

The very interesting and able contributions of our esteemed correspondent, G. W., relating to the British Navy, and his letter, which appears in this issue, is furnished with an apt commentary by the following, which we clip from the *U. S. Army and Navy Gazette*, of April 11th:

"It is stated that the *Wampanoag* is to be placed out of commission, because 'she is found to be not a proper vessel for a cruiser during peace times, on account of the cost of running her.' According to all accounts, this vessel must be something of a white elephant. It cost a huge amount to build her, and while the expense of running her in peace times would be ruinous, her battery is too light to make her formidable in case of war. In addition to this, she can only carry coal enough for six days' full steaming, while we are assured that, on her recent trial trip, it was found she would not tack under sail. Putting all these facts together, we could hardly wish a hostile power worse fate than to be compelled to keep at sea a fleet of *Wampanoags*."

From all we can learn, it appears that our neighbors have been experimenting in ships and engines with very doubtful success, if we take the above as a criterion. We believe there are four or five vessels in the United States screw fleet built upon the same plans as the *Wampanoag*, with equally unpronounceable names, and, we presume, of similar capacity.

Altogether they have constructed some twenty-five or thirty vessels at which we are not astonished that the people should grumble, and the press be indignant. For instance take the *Contocook* class, some ten in all, or the *Guerriere* and *Piscataqua*, of which they have about an equal number, and mark what has been said of them by the best informed organ on naval matters in the United States, before quoted from.

"These vessels—twenty-five or thirty in all—may be called steam-engine carriers. They seem to have been built for their engines; and the vast weight of machinery, consuming so large a share of the space in the vessel, instead of giving any commensurate result, merely sinks them in the water, and seriously impairs their efficiency as war vessels."

By this it is easy to perceive that the Americans are only now beginning to realize what it is to establish a naval power, or create what we would consider a sea-going fleet, worthy of the day and nation. The follies and blunders committed in the administration of British naval affairs, are amusingly imitated by the American dockyards, and the lessons recently taught