

print and newspapers are too fond of seizing a little thing and magnifying it into colossal proportions. The Grenadiers are all right and if future events should ever require their assistance, the motto of "Ready, aye ready" will be found just as deep in the hearts of the men of to-day, despite any interior dissensions, as was found in 1885 when they so loyally responded to the call of duty.

NOTES.

There is dissatisfaction, so says the *Toronto World*, among the city stone-cutters over the fact that the limestone for the new drill shed is to be imported from the St. Alban's quarries, Portneuf, Que., cut and ready to put into the building. The men who cut it get only \$2 or \$3 per day of ten hours, while the wages in Toronto are 43 cents an hour.

The short course term of instruction commenced at C School on Monday, February 1st, with the following officers enrolled: Lieut.-Col. Waylong, 12th Batt.; Capts. Lands and Renton, 39th Batt.; Capts. Robertson, McGillivray and Hendrie, and Lieuts. Michie and McLean, 48th Highlanders; Lieuts. Gillitt and McLean, 43rd Ottawa and Carleton Rifles; Lieut. Coombe, 39th Batt.; Lieut. Dick, 34th Batt.; and Lieut. Van Loan, 37th Batt.

RUSSIAN FIELD-MORTAR BATTERIES.

(United Service Gazette.)

In a recent number we gave some particulars of comparative trials carried out in Russia between the new mortar batteries and the heavy field batteries (42 inch,) which showed the immense superiority of shell fire possessed by the mortar batteries. Some additional particulars of the composition of the Russian mortar batteries will therefore probably be of interest, more especially as the introduction of similar field batteries in all the great armies of the Continent is now but a question of time. The inadequacy of direct fire employed against troops under cover of even the most hastily constructed entrenchments was clearly shown at Plevna, and this inadequacy is likely to be still more clearly exemplified in the future in view of the immense development which spade work is sure to assert for itself in modern battle-fields. A recent writer compares the battle fields of the future to the siege of a fortress where the advances will be made by sap and parallel until one side or the other arrives within striking distance.

Opinions may well differ as to whether this cautious and leisurely method of conducting battles is probable or not; but there can be no difference of opinion as to the certainty of the fact that every commander will endeavour to keep his troops as much as possible under cover, either by making use of the natural features of the ground or of shelter trenches. The necessity for vertical fire in the field, which has long been recognised in siege oper-

ations, therefore become more and more apparent unless gunners are content to see the supremacy of their weapon give place to the long-range rifle of the infantry soldier. Hitherto the difficulty has been to obtain powerful vertical fire in combination with a gun which whilst firing a heavy shell, shall yet be sufficiently light to be manoeuvred with the same facility as an ordinary field gun. This difficulty appears to have been fairly solved by General Engelhardt, of the Russian Artillery, by his introduction of a 6-inch mortar firing from a two-wheeled gun carriage, which differs but very slightly from the ordinary carriage used for a field gun. The mortar, which has a calibre of 6 inches, is made of steel, weighs 9 cwt. (1,014 lb.) and fires a shell of 70½ lb. It is carried on a two-wheeled carriage and limber, drawn by six horses. When unlimbered the breech end drops between the checks of the trail, and the mortar itself is supported in advance of the trunnions, on the axle-tree by two obliquely arranged elastic brackets, which are built up of four discs of india-rubber, separated from each other by metallic washers. Below the axle-tree bed connection is made with the ground by two articulated truncated conical supports, joined together at the bottom by a wide shoe, so as to afford a firm basis when resting on the ground. These supports are also built up of india-rubber and are chained up to the trail when the mortar is limbered up. The whole arrangement is so designed that the entire shock when the mortar is fired is absorbed by the rubber brackets and pedestal supports, so that no strain whatever is thrown on the axle and wheels. The shell, which, as before stated, weighs 70½ lb., contains a bursting charge of 12½ lb.; it is fired with a charge of 34-5 lb., and has an initial velocity of 771 feet, with a range of 3,500 yards. The mortar also fires a shrapnel containing 610 balls. The gun limber holds twelve projectiles and eighteen cartridges. The whole gun-carriage with limber and ammunition complete, weighs about 40 cwt.

At the present moment the Russian Army has three mortar regiments of four batteries each. The first two regiments were organised in December 1890, and the third at the end of last year, after the success of the system had been fully ascertained during the annual manoeuvres. On a peace footing each regiment numbers 25 officers, 741 men, and 269 horses, and on a war footing 25 officers, 971 men, and 722 horses. Each battery has six mortars drawn by six horses, and during peace time two-wheeled ammunition waggons drawn by a single horse. On a war footing the batteries are horsed in the same manner, but in addition to the six one-horse waggons it has also eighteen four-wheeled four-horsed ammunition caissons and a spare gun-carriage, besides a certain number of other waggons for communication with the rear.

ATHLETIC

Sports and Pastimes

There are ever recurring periods of expansion and depression in the history of all sports. And the amusement which is this year the rage to the almost total exclusion of all others, will probably in the course of a few seasons be relegated to the shelf in favour of something now deemed unworthy of consideration.

Bearing this in mind it might be attributed to a cycle of depression in the roarin' game, that the competitions held by the Canadian Branch R. C. C. C., at Montreal and Ottawa, were honoured by so very meagre an attendance of clubs outside of the two cities named.

I am strongly convinced, however, that there is a more serious feature in the situation than temporary depression, and it would be well for the Branch and well as the individual clubs composing it, if those clubs who did not take part in the primary competitions for the branch tankard and Governor General's cup would give voice to their reasons for not participating therein.

At Montreal only two clubs outside of the city—Ormsdown and Cornwall—competed, while at Ottawa there were none other than the Ottawa City clubs present.

Bearing in mind the well known strength of the Quebec club, it is surprising that they were not represented in the Montreal group.

That their absence is not to be attributed to a decrease of interest taken in the roarin' game at the ancient capital, is best evidenced by the fact of there having been sufficient esprit there to start a new club this season in addition to the one already in existence.

At Ottawa neither Arnprior nor Pembroke—both very strong clubs, as was amply demonstrated by their play last year—appeared.

The absence of strong clubs such as these from both centres ought not to be allowed to pass without a reason being obtained for their non-participation in the Branch contests.

The Canadian Branch is numerically not a strong organization, and unless some steps are taken to put it on a more popular basis it is not unlikely to become even weaker than it already is.

One very serious disadvantage which this organization labours under, is the fact that hardly a club in connection with it takes sufficient interest in its proceedings, to have one of their own members represent them at the meetings. The almost universal rule is to nominate a couple of members of Montreal clubs as representative members, and to leave them, except in very exceptional circumstances, absolutely without instructions as