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MONTREAL, NOVEMBER 15, 1895.

Notes and Comments

The rifle shooting season is now well over and our crack shots can look back upon their summer's work with satisfaction. Not only has one of their number had the great honor of bringing to Canada the blue ribbon of rifle shooting, the Queen's prize, but the shooting all round at the annual prize meetings has been exceptionally high. So far so good; but do not let us close our eyes to the fact that though the crack shots of the Canadian militia can hold their own against the crack shots of the world, the shooting of the militia force as a whole is far from being good. As a body our national defensive force attains a very low average in shooting and we must not allow ourselves to lose sight of this fact. We have succeeded in educating a few select shots, but we have dismally failed to raise the general standard of marksmanship in the militia. The target practice returns last year made a very poor showing. So far as those so far published go, there has been no improvement this year.

If we are to keep pace with the progress made in other countries of recent years and to have a force which can comply with the essential now insisted upon, that the militia shall be able to shoot as professional soldiers should in mod-

ern war, then the present course of military instruction and the supply of ammunition are grossly insufficient. It must appear clear to all who have given the matter the least bit of attention that the government is making a great mistake in delaying to adopt some practical scheme for encouraging Morris-tube shooting. There are two things which specially commend this form of rifle practice to favorable consideration—the slight expense incurred in practice and the fact that the shooting can be done in the winter months when the average militiaman has the most time on his hands. We do not pretend that Morris-tube shooting can supercede target practice on the ranges, but it is a magnificent training for range practice, leaving the recruit when he gets to the firing point on the ranges nothing to familiarize himself with but the recoil and the mysteries of windage.

As it is now the average recruit pumps the paltry twenty rounds he is allowed for target practice into the mud before he begins to understand the sighting and holding of his weapon. This bad start produces such a lack of confidence in himself and in his weapon that he retains up to the expiring of his term in the militia a deep-seated belief that the mysteries of marksmanship are beyond his mastery. The government should certainly provide every drill hall with ample Morris-tube range accommodations and supply say fifty rounds of tube ammunition annually for all recruits and men who have failed to make a fair average score.

British Columbians favor an idea to induce the Australians to send a rifle team to Canada. A communication from Victoria states that riflemen in that part of the Dominion have heard with great interest of the proposition to send a Canadian team on a trip to Australia, but cannot believe that any person would seriously think of making the Bisley team circumnavigate the globe when the sociable intercourse between colonial marksmen, which seems to be object sought, can be so much more conveniently and reasonably brought about. Since 1803, when a service between New South Wales and British Columbia was established,

the most direct and most comfortably travelled route from Australia to England has been via Canada, and if Australian and Canadian teams are to go in company to Bisley, the natural proceeding would be for the Australians to pass through the Dominion and sail with our riflemen from Montreal. Stating the distance roughly, an Australian team would have to travel, in going to England via Canada, 12,500 miles; a Canadian team would have to travel, in going to Bisley via Australia, 22,500 miles—a trip which no man would care to take unless he had a good deal more time and money at his disposal than have any of those who commonly represent the Dominion on Bisley range. If there is a desire to send a Canadian team to Australia, why couple the Bisley team with the proposition? Why not have the Australians go their own way to Bisley—by the Suez canal, by San Francisco and New York, or through Canada—and have them visit this country on the return trip, as the guests of the Canadian Rifle Associations? They would then be able to attend at the provincial meetings of Quebec and Ontario, and the Dominion gathering at Ottawa, and to make friendly visits to all parts of Canada before taking their leave for Sydney, New South Wales, where they would arrive in time for the annual prize meetings there in October and November. That would be the season for a Canadian team—chosen for the purpose—to visit Australia, and such a trip would certainly be a delightful one for those participating in it. Probably the corps and associations represented would subscribe generously to help defray the expense, but the treasury of the Dominion Rifle Association should not be tapped for purely picnic purposes. Here it may be opportunely stated that the standard of shooting in Australia is rather below that prevailing in Canada, while the colonial prize lists are very liberal. The annual report of the New South Wales Rifle Association for 1893 shows that in that year there were offered by that association alone (corresponding to our Ontario Provincial Association, except that they have no larger body similar to our D. R. A.) cash prizes amounting to upwards of \$10,000. The matches were open