



THE ROSS RIFLE, MARK II, WITH MARK III SIGHT

## OUR NATIONAL ARM

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THE Ross rifle, the national arm of Canada, by being made an issue of party politics in the House of Commons and the object of severe charges by Opposition sharpshooters, has received a distinction quite unique among weapons of defense. Not only has its selection as the national arm been set up as a question for Parliamentary debate, but it has been subjected in time of peace to practical tests more severe than it is ever likely to experience in time of war.

In view of the great importance attached to a national weapon of defense in any country, it is worth while to know how the Ross rifle became the national weapon of Canada, and to learn something about the various vicissitudes it has passed through during the five years of its existence as such. In the first place, it was invented by Sir Charles Ross, a young Scottish Knight, who seems to have come honestly by his fondness for weapons of defense. At the time of the Reformation the holy relics and church plate from the Abbey of Fearn were sent for safe keeping to Balna-

gown Castle. The Ross of that day promptly sold the plate, bought a cannon, blew up the house of his most objectionable neighbors, and went to jail. And now, after the lapse of several centuries, the direct descendant of that old-time fighting Scot has raised nearly five hundred thousand dollars, not by selling church plate, but by calling on the resources of his great estate, and invested it in the manufacture of firearms on the site of the battle of the Plains of Abraham, near the city of Quebec.

How did this come about? There had long been a growing conviction that in materials of defense the colonial Governments of the British Empire should as far as practicable carry on the manufacture of at least small arms and ammunition, and not depend on supplies from the mother country. In accordance with that view, Sir Frederick Borden, Minister of Militia and Defense for Canada, proceeded to ascertain what could be done to provide for the manufacture in Canada of an adequate supply of rifles for the various regiments of