

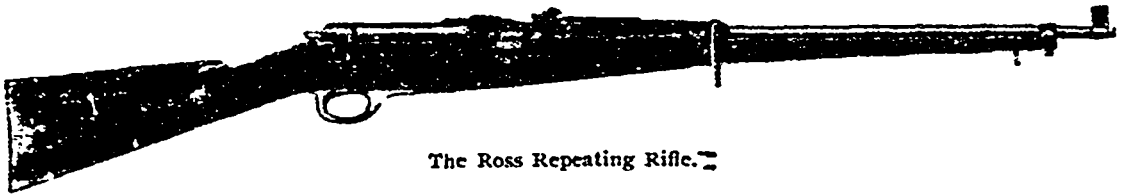
The "Ross" Rifle.

It is said the rifle invented by Sir Charles Ross has been adopted by the Department of Militia and that it will be manufactured in Quebec, hence a description of this arm will, doubtless, interest many of our readers, especially as it may also be sold in sporting model ere long.

The weapon was recently tested at Mr. Charles Lancaster's private range near London, and, subsequently, Arms and Explosives published the following account of the trials :

Sir Charles Ross has been wisely inspired in producing as his sample British weapon one which is adapted for the existing .303 Service ammunition, since this at once places it within the region of practical politics as a military arm that is well worth the careful consideration of the Small Arms Committee, and allows of a ready comparison with the Lee-Enfield on all counts. But beyond the leading

wood-work in one unbroken piece from butt plate to muzzle locking-ring, in place of the ugly and unpractical dividing of the stock just behind the shoe in the Lee-Metford and Lee-Enfield rifles, which was adopted, apparently, for no other reason than because the Martini-Henry had, perforce, to be so divided. These are features which are at once to be appreciated by a practical observer, but as regards other external characteristics it may be said that the rifle which Sir Charles Ross has brought over from Canada is what is termed a "shop pattern," and may be capable of some modification, as, for instance, in the matter of providing a half-pistol grip to the stock. On the other hand, this weapon in its present form "handles" beautifully in every respect, and the wood-work is finely modelled without sacrificing any of the strength requisite in an arm destined to the un-



The Ross Repeating Rifle.

conditions of having a barrel of Service calibre chambered to suit the Government cartridge, the rifle has few points of similarity with that now issued to the British Army. Even in external appearance the differences are sufficiently striking. For example, the magazine of the Ross rifle is flush with the wood of the stock, so that there is no unsightly metal projection in front of the trigger guard to worry the soldier in every conceivable way, and to prevent him from "sloping arms" according to the time-honored custom prevailing before 1892. It is well-known that the method of carrying the Lee-Enfield sideways at the "slope," which is necessitated by the obtrusion of the magazine at the place which should naturally rest on the shoulder, proves excessively tiring to the wrist and hand during a long march, and tends to cause a marked unsteadiness if any firing has to be done subsequently. Another feature to be noted is the continuation of the

ceremonious treatment of a "Tommy" under Service conditions.

Turning to the mechanism of the rifle, the bolt is of the front-lock straight-pull variety, a single rectilinear movement backwards and forwards serving to lock and unlock the breech-action and cock the firing-pin. This simplicity of operation, which is very marked in firing the rifle as compared with the usual turning-bolt, is attained by making the bolt-head separate from the main portion of the bolt, the two engaging by a series of volute grooves in such a manner that the pushing of the bolt home rotates the head, so that two lugs upon it enter into corresponding recesses in the front end of the breech-shoe as in the turning-bolt system, and *vice versa*, the withdrawal of the bolt rotates the head so as to free the lugs. It should be noted in this connection that Sir Charles Ross has fitted a long and strong mechanical extractor, which, in conjunction with the easy