

CANADIAN MILITARY RIFLE LEAGUE.



THE seventh annual meeting of the Canadian Military Rifle League was held in the Russell House on Wednesday evening. There was a large attendance of riflemen, the dining hall being quite crowded. Lieut.-Col. Massey, president of the League, presided, also in attendance, Capt. Andrews, secretary. Among those at the right and left of the president were: Major-General Gascoigne, Col. the Hon. M. Aylmer, A. G., Col. Walker Powell, late A.G., Major-General Laurie, M.P., and Col. Panet, Deputy Minister of Militia. There were also present officers representing the League in all parts of the Dominion.

Col. Massey said he had much pleasure in presiding at the seventh annual meeting of the League. Major-General Gascoigne took special interest in the League, and had allowed them to wear the badges won at the League matches. He had great pleasure as president of the League in witnessing the success which had attended the association during the present year; the entries having increased from 123 to 187 in 1896. This must be very gratifying to every member of the League and to every rifleman in the Dominion, as no organization did so much towards furthering the interest in rifle shooting as the Rifle League. (Applause.) They had been again indebted to the kindness of the Government for supplying them with free ammunition, which had gone a great deal towards their success. They were also indebted to the Department of Militia for so promptly and so carefully forwarding the ammunition to the various parts of the Dominion. They had not heard of a single miscarriage of any of ammunition. He would not detain them any further than to say that the scores were forwarded promptly to the secretary and had been published in the Monday morning papers from one end of the country to the other. (Applause.)

Lieut.-Col. Starke, commandant of the Bisley team, at this stage entered the meeting and was accorded a great ovation.

The secretary, Capt. Andrews, read the minutes of last meeting, which were considered satisfactory and approved of.

The president said that the council had this year decided to give sterling silver plate, as they thought it would form permanent articles for the teams winning them in the different matches.

Major-General Gascoigne, Commander-in-Chief, who presented the prizes to the corps in the first series competition, said that he took it as a very high honor to take part in the presentation of prizes. He had a very great interest in the League. If possible, he had a greater sympathy than with the larger association which he had attended during the past three or four days. His reason for that was because he held that it fostered greater proficiency in the use of the rifle. The militia were now armed with the best possible weapon that could be obtained. Proficiency with the rifle was one of the things he held most by and he meant to make it an important feature in the course of instruction. The large associations did an enormous amount of good, as they brought out men from different parts of the country who had great proficiency with the rifle. He had not so much sympathy with the men who could put on large scores as he had with the bad shots. If a regiment had a few crack marksmen and a lot of poor shots, then its efficiency was greatly reduced. He was greatly pleased with the management of the D.R.A., as he had seen a great deal that gave him pleasure. He was glad to see the officers who acted as range officers carefully dressed and attending to their duties with interest. He could not

say that, however, of all the competitors. He saw a good number in the competitions who presumably thought that they were uniformed according to regulations, but he thought that if he had been going to inspect the battalion they would have been differently attired. He had seen some on the streets who were not dressed as he would have liked them to be. He thought they should always try and show to the best advantage, as otherwise it did more harm than the individual was aware of. He thought these associations, excellent as they were, should be conducted on military lines. It tended to weaken discipline a little. Personally he would like to see all rifle competitions carried out as they would be in the field. For instance, he saw one man on the range use a blow pipe between each shot, and he asked him if he would have time to do that in action. He believed greatly in and had great sympathy with associations of this kind, but he thought if more of a military spirit were infused in them they would be of greater good. (Applause.)

The Major-General then presented the prizes won in the first series.

Major-General Laurie, in presenting the next prizes, began "Old comrades of the force," which evoked much applause. He differed a little, he said, from the Major-General in regard to the good of the associations, such as they were witnessing at Ottawa. He was sure that the Dominion Rifle Association had done much to bring the men into closer contact with one another. Twenty-five years ago the men in the militia of Canada were utter strangers to each other. Now they came from all parts of the Dominion, and they were not such strangers. He took always a great interest in the association, and he had been meeting year after year well-known faces, and he hoped to do so again. Nova Scotia, he noticed, was not down for any team prize, and he cautioned Nova Scotians not to let that occur again. (Applause.)

Col. Powell, late adjutant-general, said that he was very pleased to meet them again. The association was doing good work, and, as Canadians, he thought they were soon to take their proper place in the Empire. (Applause.)

Col. the Hon. M. Aylmer thought that the granting of free ammunition had done a great deal of good towards the furthering of the interests of the militia force. It was whispered, he said, that they were to have a new rifle range. It was a beautiful stretch of ground, and was within a short distance of the city. It would be 1,500 yards in extent, and Col. Gibson, the president of the association, had examined it and was pleased with it. The Dominion Rifle Association would fix their camp there next year, and he felt sure it would be found satisfactory. (Applause.)

Major Sam Hughes, in moving a vote of thanks to the Minister of Militia for granting free ammunition, said that by doing so it had advanced rifle shooting. (Applause.)

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