

The district camps have been particularly fortunate in happening upon a "fine spell" at a season when unsettled weather was to be feared. Indeed the past two weeks have been about the most pleasant of the whole cold and changeable summer. We hope to hear somewhat full details from all the camps, and as a forerunner give a short report from Brockville, where everything appears to have run very smoothly, without the excitement of a general inspection or of a field day.

The British Columbia Provincial Rifle Association are to be complimented upon the successful prize meeting which they held last month, and details of which we now publish. It may be gleaned from the scores that all the events were well contested, and if the shooting as a rule was not first class this may be satisfactorily accounted for by the state of the weather, or by other causes with which we cannot be acquainted. For the Wimbledon team Lieut. Wollacott is credited with a score of 345, which would give him a high place in the twenty, but it turns out, now that full returns have been received, that 21 rounds too many were fired, through a mistake in the instructions sent to the association, and, consequently some 60 points must be deducted from this aggregate, which will throw him out of the race altogether. We hope that the completion of the C. P. R. will result in British Columbia being largely represented at our Dominion matches next fall.

RIFLES AND RIFLE SHOOTING.—XX.

IV.—BY CAPTAIN HENRY F. PERLEY, HEADQUARTERS STAFF.

Many complain of their sight becoming obscure at times. This may be cured by looking through the fingers of either hand, which are to be closed to form a cone, at the sky, not the sun. The forefinger and thumb should be closed to such an extent as to admit of the passage of only a small ray of light. It is claimed that looking through a hole punched with a pin through a card will cause the obscuration to disappear.

When closing the left eye in firing care must be taken not to close it too tightly. Both eyes are connected by one nerve, and by claspings the eyelid too tightly over the eyeball a tremor is imparted to the other which is calculated to disturb the fixed gaze so essential to ensure a sure and correct aim.

It is not of any use to be in possession of a good rifle, expert in its use, and capable of making the necessary allowances for light and wind, if certain capacities are wanting. Having settled into the right position it becomes necessary that the whole attention should be fixed, the rifle grasped firmly and pressed home to the shoulder, not too lightly, or the results will be a "kick" or perhaps a miss, whilst with too tight a pressure a *high* shot will almost invariably follow: the left eye closed, the sight directed to the point of aim, the usual amount of foresight taken and brought into view above the backsight, which must have its proper elevation, and due allowance made for wind, the breathing restrained, and the trigger firmly pressed. The gaze along the sights and at the point of aim must be steadfast, and any tendency to flinch at the moment of pressing the trigger must be avoided, as to do so at that critical moment will result in inaccuracy of some kind. If the arms should feel oppressed, or the eye blurs, bring the rifle down and rest, for it is useless trying to secure a good shot if either the body or the eye is affected by being kept too long in position. To pull the trigger at the exact time is one of the hardest things a young shot has to learn, and it must be mastered before success can be obtained. H. P. Miller in one of his editions of the "Guide to the Queen's Sixty" says: "If you tell a recruit that he cannot pull the trigger when he likes, he will hardly believe you; yet such is really the case. The brain through the eye decides the proper instant to pull the trigger, and unless the finger instantly obeys that decision the aim goes wrong." The great object to be attained therefore is unity between the eye, the brain and the finger, and until such unity has been obtained, all knowledge of wind and light will be of little avail, and it can be obtained by constant practice, and what is as good strength of will, which is a creature—if the expression may be used—that is either under the control of confidence or of doubt, and inward failing of heart. Strength of will is to the front when a man lies down convinced of his ability to hit every time. Will and intellect, or the hand and the eye, will then work together.

According to the regulations which obtain in the service, with a view to safety where large bodies of men with loaded rifles are massed

together, the minimum pull off of the trigger has been limited to 6 lbs., and this has been adopted as the standard by all rifle associations and any person found to be shooting or to have shot with a less pull off, is visited with justice short and sharp. Some men there are who reduce the pull off with the object of obtaining possible advantages, and others keep within the bounds and come down nearly to the limit. If a trigger be set at 6½ lbs. pull it will be found after a few hours use, especially on a hot day, not to stand the 6 lbs. test, and the user might possibly be disqualified. It is therefore safer to keep the pull off at from 6½ to 7 lbs., and if such be adopted instead of the heating which just shaves disqualification, much satisfaction will be obtained. There is a feeling prevalent amongst some marksmen that their rifles, being right, ought not to be tested; or, that, having once been tested during a match they should not be tried again during its continuance; but human nature is weak, and we are all prone to take advantage where we can: if it were not so there would not be any need of passing the rule that triggers should be tested. It is possible to have the pull off at 7 lbs. and at the same time have the lock so adjusted that the nose of the sear can be set to catch on the edge of the full bent of the tumbler, and then a light pull is all that is needed to fire the rifle. This practise approximates to that called sharp, and it is much to be doubted if the person who adopts it succeeds as well as he who presses steadily on the trigger. The pull off of "Brown Bess" ranged from 16 to 23 lbs.

There are three positions in which firing can take place, viz.: the standing, kneeling and the prone—with the head to the target. For a description of the first two the reader is referred to the last copy of *Rifle Exercises and Musketry Instruction* and is advised to practise the instructions therein given; but the best position of all is the prone. Whilst lying down the body is in a state of rest and the elbows support the chest, and raise the head to the proper height to take aim. The left elbow should not be directly under the rifle, but a trifle to the left, so that the tendency of the left hand to push the rifle to the right may balance exactly an opposite tendency on the part of the right hand. The right shoulder should be raised as much as possible, and the right elbow planted a little in advance, so that the shoulder blade may be covered by the muscles; and this act of thus planting the elbow well forward and raising the shoulder enables a better and firmer position to be taken. If a mat can be had use it, if not, try for a couple of depressions in the ground into which to place the elbows, and thus reduce the chances of slipping or spreading. The body should be carried to "half left," the legs spread somewhat apart and the feet turned out, thus causing the body to lie close to the ground. By thus placing the body to the left the collar bone is kept out of the way, and the muscles of the shoulder receive the recoil. If the rifle "kicks" whilst lying down the reason may be found in that the body was placed straight, or nearly so, in the line of fire. If the recoil comes against the proper place there need not be any fear of a sore shoulder, and great care should be taken that the rifle be not pressed against the muscles of the arm, for if they become bruised shooting may be deferred for a day or a month. The recoil of the Martini-Henry is much greater than that of the Snider. *Verb. sap.*

There is a good deal in coaching, as it is called, and when legitimately applied much benefit therefrom may be derived. A good shot, one thoroughly acquainted with the rifle, and up in all that pertains to its use, can coach a beginner through the difficulties which beset his path, and it behoves that beginner to pay attention to the instruction thus imparted, and to remember it, so that when left to himself the lessons he has learned may be of service. Forgetfulness is the bane of young beginners and that is begotten of carelessness. Coaching in such a manner is commendable when undertaken during practice, but it is reprehensible during a match, and is properly forbidden by the Dominion and Provincial Rifle Associations, though there are some who do not view the rule in a favorable light. The benefits arising from the abolishment of coaching at a match are, that all are placed on an equal footing, and, having to depend upon themselves, they become more observant and self-reliant, and in the end find themselves free from that feeling of dependence on the advice of others.

By some it is thought that the simple matter of note-taking is all affectation, and unnecessary trouble, or of no possible future use. Others again maintain the opposite opinion, deeming it an important portion of the work which should be scrupulously performed. Note books there are by the score, some of them simple and others complex and excessively minute in the details, even going to the length of noting the readings of the thermometer, barometer, anemometer, hygrometer, etc., for every shot, but a great deal of this extra notation died out with the long range match rifle. Any plain, simple book will be sufficient to note the value of the hit, its position on the target, the weather, light, wind, range, elevation, etc.; and it is well to note every shot fired, and especially the misses and why they were made; everything should be noted honestly and the score should be made on the target and not in the book. Notes