Will we have an Arsenal.

Among the most important events in connection with the militia, and not only the militia but the whole country, which occurred during the past year, was the successful conversion of a smooth bore gun into a rifled gun on the Palliser system, by Messrs. Gilbert and Sons. Canada Engine Works, Montreal. The gun, a 32 pr. of 56 cwt being furnished by the Government, and the expense of conversion borne by Sir William Palliser. The proof took place in the presence of Lieut.-Col. the Honble L. R. Masson, Minister of Militia, who expressed himself satisfied with the manner in which the gun stood the heavy test to which it was subjected, the last round—of unprecedented severity—being composed of a charge of 24 lbs. Pebble powder and a 64 pr. common shell.

The establishment of the Royal Arsenal at Woolwich, may be said to have been commenced by a similar event, in the latter case, however, it was not quite so successful, as during the process of casting a bronze gun the metal flew and killed 17 of the spectators, besides wounding the first Colonel of the Royal Artillery in four places.

Will the test on St. Helen's Island be followed by the establishment, on however small a scale, of an arsenal in Canada for the manufacture of the supplies needed for the defence of the country.

It has been said that Canada can rely on England for supplies when required, and doubtless the mother country would be in sore need herself when she would turn her back on her oldest daughter, but there are other considerations which might interfere sadly with England's willingness and which are beyond the power of man to control. Relying on Great Britain, means having a base of supplies at a distance of about 2500 miles from our Eastern boundary and about 6000 miles from our Western and least protected coast, the point most liable to be assailed from the sea, and which was seriously threatened when war was probable with Russia. It may be urged that this distance can be traversed in eight or at the most ten days, by the fast steamers now plying between England and Canada, but it must be borne in mind that the sea is, at all times, a very uncertain element and not always to be depended on, the record of wrecks along our coasts is something terrible to contemplate; delays on account of fog are of frequent occurrence; or a fast steaming cruiser might possibly intercept the vessel containing the stores most seriously required; the non-arrival of a steamer, laden with ammunition, might cost the loss of many important positions, possibly the whole country. Canada has hitherto seemed asleep with regard to the necessity of preparing for her defence; there are, unfortunately, too many who say the best defence for Canada is no defence—what would a merchant say if one were to tell him that the best way of keeping thieves out of his warehouse at night, would be to leave the door open—foremost among these are those who when the town is quiet say "the police are sufficient to protect us;" "the money spent on militia purposes annually is worse than thrown away;" etc., but let 40 or 50 angry laborers, out on strike, parade the streets, and they are the first to cry for military protection.

The time has arrived, however, when Canada should look around and prepare at home, the *matériel* necessary for her own defence; the existing store, for even the present obsolete armament, being nearly exhausted. That its manufacture here would prove advantageous to the country is beyond the shadow of a doubt. In the first place, it could be obtained cheaper, the cost of transport, at least, being saved; secondly the money required for its purchase would be kept in the country; thirdly, not the least of the many arguments which might be adduced in its favor, it would afford work to many idle and may-be starving artizers.

A considerable supply of small arm ammunition is required annually, and much more would be expended, on repayment by our volunteers, if it could be purchased at a cheaper rate from the Government; that the quantity expended is not thrown away is shown by the fact that the Canadian team is able to hold its own at Wimbledon. It has been found that the gunpowder can be made in this country, why not try the manufacture of the whole cartridge, a good reason for which, exists in the fact, that our militia is now armed with a weapon which has been withdrawn from the regular army, it having been replaced by the Martini-Henry, which requires a different cartridge; the manufacture of the ammunition for the rifle in our possession (the Snider) will therefore if it has not already, shortly cease in the Royal Arsenal. Again there are at most only from 20 to 25 rifled garrison guns in the Dominion and these are the only ones that could be depended on if necessity arose for their use, the others having been obsolete for years, and utterly unfit to cope with the guns which might be brought against us. It has been proved that these can be converted into good serviceable weapons at a reduced price, compared with their cost in England.

The shot and shell required for them can easily be made in the country.

Our supply of gun carriages cannot last for ever, wooden carriages must deteriorate through use and effects of climate; we have heard of practice having to be discontinued owing to the carriage falling to pieces when the gun was fired—a gun would not be of much service if this occurred in action, and the detachment had to wait until a second carriage was received from England to replace it.

Some one is credited with saying "trust in God but keep your powder dry," it is just as well for Canada to have faith in England, but at the same time to be able to supply herself with the articles required for her defence in time of war; the best way to accomplish this is to cultivate their manufacture in time of peace: that this should be carried out under Government control and under sufficient military protection is self-evident.

Cavalry.

The difficulties with which the cavalry arm of the Canadian Militia has always had to contend, makes it only the more wonderful that a sufficient number of enthusiastic officers have been found, among a people not over famous for horsemanship, to maintain such a really respectable body of irregulars, as is represented by the 40 troops of cavalry, belonging to the active force.

These troops in round numbers amount to some 150 officers and 1800 N. C. officers and men; of whom about two thirds were allowed to perform last year, the annual twelve days drill and the total cost therefore of this portion of the militia may be estimated at $30,000 annually.

Now the very first question that enters the mind of a soldier is: whether this small body of mounted men, should not be made as efficient as possible? and whether it would not be real economy in the long run, to do so? while on the other hand, the first question which presents itself to the mind of the economist is: whether this greater efficiency and more thorough military bearing, does not mean, an enormously increased expenditure which the finances of the country cannot afford, and the remoteness of danger do not warrant.

If then we can show how this respectable little force—equal in number to the British cavalry sent to the Crimea—can be made fairly efficient, and that too, at such a modest sum in comparison to the advantages gained; hesitation to adopt the suggestions, will be difficult.

All that is really necessary at present, in the opinion of many is to open two small cavalry schools of instruction, in connection with "A" and "B" Batteries, with a sufficient number of men to form a squad, under a competent cavalry officer instructor who can lecture upon, and teach the higher branches of cavalry work, as well as riding school drill. Should the number of those attending for a *short course* of six weeks or three months be limited, to say 12 at a time; by the end of each year from 48 to 96 men could pass through each school, and the expense including horses would be less than $7000 per annum, while the