

THE CANADIAN MILITIA GAZETTE

A WEEKLY JOURNAL DEVOTED TO THE INTERESTS OF THE ACTIVE FORCE OF THE DOMINION.

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CORRESPONDENCE.

The MILITIA GAZETTE aims at being the recognized medium of instruction and information for Canadian militiamen and rifle shots. Communications on the subjects to which its pages are devoted are respectfully invited. Anonymous communications will not be regarded. No name will be published, except with the writer's consent. The editors will not be responsible for the views of correspondents.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS.

COMMENT AND CRITICISM.	SELECTED.
A request for subscriptions.	The encampment season.
The Middleton Match.	CORRESPONDENCE.
The Military Match Teams.	A question of courtesy.
The five-year rule of Wimbledon.	Notes to Correspondents.
The Provincial Meetings.	ONTARIO PROVINCIAL PRIZE MEETING.
The Victoria Warder's Militia Column.	NEW BRUNSWICK PROVINCIAL PRIZE MEETING
CONTRIBUTED ARTICLES.	PERSONALS.
Wimbledon.	REGIMENTAL NOTES.
Rifles and Rifle Shooting, (XVI)—Capt. Perley.	THE TARGET.
The D.R.A. Meeting.	CLEANINGS.

COMMENT AND CRITICISM.

To the competitors at the D. R. A. meeting, the MILITIA GAZETTE makes an appeal for support. It has now been published for four months, and has sufficiently shown by its course so far what it intends doing, what it is capable of becoming, and we feel that it merits the confidence and support of every rifleman in Canada. It has been established not so much as a commercial enterprise as to advance the militiamen's interests in every possible way, and for that reason has already been cordially endorsed by the most enthusiastic officers of the force. It has already attained a good circulation, but we consider that every D. R. A. competitor should give it the support of a subscription, and there could not be a better time for beginning than now. The next number will contain complete details of all this week's shooting, and these immediately subsequent will have accounts of the annual camps of instruction. The GAZETTE has a tent on the D. R. A. grounds, where any information respecting its standing and circulation will be cheerfully given and where subscriptions or advertisements will be received.

In the prizes offered by Sir Frederick Middleton for competition, the practical nature of the conditions, which he himself imposed, is conspicuous. We find that the men are expected to advance at the double, to expose themselves as little as possible, and to fire at irregu-

lar intervals when they see an opportunity, in this manner approaching as nearly as possible to the conditions of actual skirmishing; above all, they are not hampered with knapsacks as in the other "military" matches. Who ever heard of soldiers going into battle of late years loaded down with their kits? Or if they are attacked on the march, is not their first move to rid themselves of as much weight as possible? We wish the D. R. A. could see their way to put the other skirmishing matches on the same footing, and abolish the (from a shooting point of view) absurd inspection of kits, with its delays and its annoyances.

The fact that all the military matches are arranged for teams of the same size (five men) has the effect of greatly restricting the number of competitors, and so diminishing the usefulness of the matches, inasmuch as the same individuals fire throughout the series, and consequently, even though a battalion has a large number of representatives on the ground, only five of them receive the training that these competitions were designed to give. We would suggest some change in this respect. Different numbers of men might compose the teams, or the individual members of the team might be compelled to be changed, or officers might be allowed to enter in some of the series. While knapsacks are required it would of course be an anomaly to see an officer firing, but otherwise there seems no objection, as it is certainly the officers who on active service ought to be best acquainted with the details of skirmishing, and there is no school like experience.

The business meeting of the competitors during the D. R. A. matches will furnish a suitable occasion to discuss anew the operation of the rule preventing men from going to Wimbledon more than two years out of five, a rule of which we strongly advocate the abolition. It was adopted with a view of encouraging young shots, but it is doubtful if it ever increased the attendance at the matches by a single man, while it certainly had the effect of ruling out reliable shots and allowing inferior ones to go in their place, and the Dominion has too much at stake at Wimbledon to be able to afford to send an inferior team. The argument that we would be thought to have only a few good shots in Canada if the same men went year after year is fallacious, because it would be recognized that the most experienced men would naturally be most likely to win their places, while there would always be enough new blood to show that we had a reserve to draw from. Who was it secured the honors for this year's team? Ashall, Thomas, Patterson, Wynne and Hilton, all but one of whom have had previous experience at Wimbledon. Besides, we find opposed to the Canadian team every year, not a different set of men, but the same old team shots season after season, McVittie, McAuslan, Pearse and that ilk, although the mother country has some 3,000 marksmen to choose from. By all means, then, let the competitors express themselves on Tuesday so strongly and unanimously on this point as to necessitate action by the annual meeting on their suggestion.