

The Rifle.

AMHERST, N.S.

A number of persons interested in improving marksmanship with the rifle have organized a rifle club, with the following officers: Major G. E. Church, president; Lt.-Col. M. B. Harrison, vice-president; Major J. Albert Black, secretary; R. H. Tremaine, treasurer. The executive committee consists of these officers and Capt. Jephtha Harrison, D. D. Betts, Dr. Dobson, Lieut. R. Soy, and Dr. Bliss. By-laws were passed. The president and Capt. Harrison were appointed to report on a range. Membership is open to male residents of the county, over 16 years of age, on being recommended by two members, accepted by ballot, and paying one dollar. The rules for shooting are those of the N. S. Provincial R. A. It is intended to have monthly shooting matches during the season. The expenses of the club are to be met by each member paying \$1 a year and 25c. for each shooting, whether he take part therein or not.

The *V. S. Gazette* of March 29th last prints the following, which certainly speaks for itself:—

Totals of 44 shoots last season by Sergt. Fulton, (G.M.), Queen's Westminster. Volunteer positions, and without striking out a single bad score.

88 92 95 84 96 97 94 93 98 91 90 88 93
94 94 80 92 91 87 86 91 88 94 87 96 94
88 96 90 80 91 87 89 96 93 87 95 89 92
90 95 93 97 91
Average, 91.5.

MORE ABOUT THE NEW RIFLE.

An official army order gives all the details of the mechanism of the new magazine rifle with which the army is to be supplied. The weight, with magazine empty, is 9 pounds 8 ounces, the new sword-bayonet, 15½ ounces, the scabbard 4¾ ounces, the magazine, when filled with 8 cartridges, 13 ounces. The length of the rifle is 4 feet 1 inch, and the sword bayonet 1 foot 4 inches.

The magazine consists of a sheet-steel-box inserted from under the body in front of the trigger-guard through an opening in the body. It is held in position by a spring in the body, engaging in a notch on the magazine. It will contain eight cartridges, and may be filled when in position in the rifle or when detached by inserting the cartridges one by one. A spring at the bottom of the magazine presses upward a movable platform, forcing the columns of cartridges also forward. A "cut-off" is fitted to the right side of the body, which, when pressed inward, stops the supply of cartridges from the magazine, so that the arm may then be used as a single loader. When the "cut-off" is pulled out, the lower edge of the bolt, on being driven forward, engages the top edge of the uppermost cartridge in the magazine and forces it into the chamber, and so on until the magazine is emptied. The magazine can be removed by pressing a small lever inside the trigger-guard.

One magazine is attached to each rifle, being secured from loss by a chain-link. A spare magazine is also issued with each arm. The stock, like that of the Martini-Henry rifle, is in two pieces, the fore end and the butt. Under the hinder part of the small of the butt is a projection forming a so-called "pistol-grip." The butt is secured to the body by a "stock-bolt." The butt plate is fitted with a trap giving access to the unoccupied portion of the stock-bolt recess, which is arranged to contain an oil bottle and a jag.

The rifle is provided with two sets of sights. The foresight and the backsight are fixed in the usual position on the barrel. The foresight is a square block, with a vertical cut through it, showing a fine line of light. Aim is taken by fitting this square in a corresponding square notch in the backsight, so that lines of light of equal width may be seen on each side of it, and aligning the central line of light on the point to be hit. The lowest or "fixed sight" is that for 300 yards. Using this sight, a head and shoulder figure can be hit at any distance between 375 and 150 yards, while a six-foot figure can be hit up to about 500 yards, without in either case aiming off the figures. The highest graduation is for 1,900 yards. The rifle is also fitted with extreme range sights. The front sight, which is called the dial sight, is graduated from 1,800 yards up to 3,500 yards. There are two kinds of ammunition pouches, one holding forty rounds and the other fifty. The cartridge is made of solid drawn brass and is charged with ordinary gunpowder pressed into the form of a pellet, with both ends slightly rounded.—*Manchester Guardian*.

It seems to be decided that the Duke of Cambridge will shortly relinquish the position of Commander-in-Chief of the British Army, and it is stated that Queen Victoria will not exercise the prerogative of appointing her son by patent, and that the Duke of Connaught will be made General Commanding-in-Chief for a term of five years, with provisions in a royal warrant which may be held to give that term a definite character.

Correspondence.

This paper does not necessarily share the views expressed in correspondence published in its columns, the use of which is freely granted to writers on topics of interest to the Militia.]

THE QUEEN'S OWN RIFLES OF CANADA REVOLVER ASSOCIATION.

EDITOR MILITIA GAZETTE,—For many years the necessity of having such an association in connection with the regiment has been apparent, but until the present there have been difficulties in the way. The last three years have given an immense impetus to rifle and revolver shooting amongst the "boys in green," and the shooting contingent is now so large that something has to be done to fill up the gap between ranges on the commons on Saturday afternoon. To those who are unacquainted with the method of firing at the different ranges, it may be interesting to know that when a man has fired at the first range he has about an hour to wait before he can begin at the next, as his comrades have to finish, so at the three distances he will have about two hours on his hands, and to utilize this time is partly the object of the new association. But another, and not by any means less important object, is to furnish a source of amusement to those officers and men who, not being rifle shots, are attracted to the commons through interest in their companies, and to those who happen to reach the ranges too late for the regular practice. But to the officers more especially does this new departure open up a field for instruction, and presents a pastime as attractive and scientific as ever rifle shooting has been. There can be few officers who do not know the value of a revolver when it comes to close quarters. In fact, their very existence might depend on having and knowing how to use one.

It has been decided to open the association to members of the regiment only, and the enthusiastic meeting in the orderly room on Thursday, April 3rd, shows the feeling of the officers and men on the subject. It will be seen from the *personnel* of the staff of the new association that these are workers, no less than four of them having held previously offices of an equally important nature in connection with rifle associations. Capt. H. M. Pellatt, donor of the handsome trophy for rifle shooting, is president (that means another trophy.) Lieut. M. S. Mercer, the indefatigable secretary-treasurer of last year's rifle committee, vice-president; Corp. W. S. Duncan, 32 King street west, secretary treasurer. The executive committee are: Lieut. J. F. Crean, secretary-treasurer for Regimental Rifle Committee, 1890; Staff-Sergts. W. Ashall and W. Harp. The secretary-treasurer will be pleased to accept challenges from any of the outside revolver associations.

W. S. DUNCAN,
Secy.-Treas.

Losses in Battle Compared

At the battle of Ligny, both victors and vanquished suffered a loss of over 25 per cent. of their total numbers, in an action which lasted from 2 P. M. to 9 P. M. approximately. That implies that at the end of the day some 50,000 killed and wounded covered the area on which the fighting took place. Let us compare this battle, one of the bloodiest but certainly not the bloodiest of the many that took place during the Napoleonic era, with the very bloodiest fighting of all which has occurred since the introduction of the breech-loader, and between the same nations an essential factor to be borne in mind: we allude to the battle of Vionville. In this action, which began at 9 A. M. and lasted till late into the night, 58,000 Germans of all arms fought against 95,000 French—and lost, the Germans 22 per cent. of their strength and the French 13 per cent. of their strength. In these figures the troops present on the field but not engaged are included, whereas at Ligny practically all the men on the ground were on both sides brought into action. Now, the real strain on the discipline and endurance of the troops depends on the rapidity with which the losses are suffered, with the closeness with which dead and wounded lie, and with the ghastly nature of the wounds inflicted. At Ligny the losses could only be inflicted during the short space of time in which the attacking troops were passing over the narrow stretch of fire-swept ground, a stretch barely one-tenth the width of that the Germans had to cross at Vionville. Almost the whole of the loss was suffered on an area about two miles long and barely a quarter of a mile broad. In other words, some 50,000 dead and dying were piled together on half a square mile of ground; whereas at Vionville the dead and dying were distributed over an area eight by two, and these men were killed mostly by small bore rifle bullets or fragments of shell, instead of being mowed down by solid shot and 14-bore balls. But the strain on the troops is ultimately produced by the horror of what the men see around them. There can be no doubt that the field of Ligny was a far more vivid presentation of hell upon earth than any of the fights of the last war. Yet the steady old shoulder-to-shoulder discipline stood it on both sides, for neither was demoralized at the close of the day, whereas both French and Germans had about reached the end of their tether as night fell on August 16.—*Army and Navy Gazette*.