

THE CANADIAN MILITIA GAZETTE

A Weekly Journal devoted to the Interests of the Active Force of the Dominion.

Fourth Year.
VOL. III, No. 63.

OTTAWA, THURSDAY, 13th SEPTEMBER, 1888.

\$1.50 per annum in advance
Single Copies Five Cents.

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MISCELLANEOUS.

Topics of the Week.

The one feature of the Dominion Rifle meeting which emphatically was not a success, was the formal presentation of prizes—"public" it was called, from force of habit. Properly speaking the public were unrepresented, the male element being wanting; and though a good number of the lady friends of the officers of the association and successful Ottawa competitors graced the occasion by their presence, it is to be feared the association did not gain thereby in proportion to the inconvenience entailed upon the competitors, forced to appear, if they came at all, in full dress, not otherwise required on the range. All winners of prizes of \$10 and upwards were supposed to receive them at this formal presentation, but the great majority gave it a wide berth, and drew their money quietly at the Treasurer's quarters. We desire to repeat the protest made in former years against this annual presentation farce, as at present carried out. Let it be in the evening, in a public hall, and we venture to say it will soon become one of the most popular features of the meeting, in place of being a decided bore as at present.

Colonel Nicholson, the commandant at Shoeburyness, paid a high tribute recently to the Volunteer gunners who had been engaged in competition there. He said he should "not be afraid to be in any fort fighting against any foe if it were manned by volunteer artillery with a fortnight's experience." Nobody knows better than Colonel Nicholson what gunners should be able to do, and his words therefore have been received with gratification by the whole artillery volunteer force of Great Britain.

The *U. S. Army and Navy Journal* condemns the buncombe retaliation message of President Cleveland. Having shown how uncalled for the message was, and pointed out that neither in Canada nor the States is it taken seriously, that journal proceeds: "The policy which the President recommends is one that tends directly toward, if not to war. * * * To publicly declare an intention to assume the aggressive toward a foreign nation, without having the power to do so, is to humiliate us in the eyes of the world. This is a mistake no man trained in the school of war would make, and it has always been our prophecy that the danger of involving this country in war would come when the rule of men educated wholly in civil pursuits began. The soldier's training teaches him to be vigorous in action and reserved in speech. In matters of grave concern he says less than he means, rather than more, and his words have all the force of deeds. The politician is so open to the suspicion of meaning less than he says that he often creates the very situation he would most of all avoid and finds himself unpre-

pared to meet it. Vigorous words count for little unless they are accepted as indicating not only the intention but the ability to follow them if needed with vigorous action, and a refusal to adequately provide for a military establishment is not their fitting accompaniment."

"We live," says the *Volunteer Record*, "in what is essentially an age of 'records,' and to make them and break them has become one of the objects of existence with a big section of aspirants for fame. Rifle shooting has, in this respect, its triumphs as well as other forms of sport and pastime; and it is to Col. Sergt. Moore, of the 1st Berks Rifles, that the honour belongs of eclipsing all past achievements in regard to tall scoring. His magnificent score of 103 was made in shooting for the Challenge Cup of the Reading detachment of his corps. The record was as follows: 33, 35, 35—the last seventeen shots out of the twenty-one being bull's-eyes. There was a front fish-tail wind blowing at the time of shooting, and a slight rain was falling." The record previously had been a score of 102 compiled by Pte. McVittie.

Shooting forms a prominent feature of the education at the Sandhurst Royal Military College. The following is a quotation from a recent report by the board of visitors: "It is satisfactory to notice that rifle and revolver shooting—the benefits of which were strongly advocated by the board in a previous report—have been still further developed since last year, and there are now 221 members of the Rifle Club, 267 of the Revolver Club, and 125 who subscribe to practice with the Morris tube. Fourteen rifle matches have taken place, of which eleven have been won by Cadets. The board are of the opinion that every legitimate encouragement should be given to the extension of rifle and revolver practice." We commend the above to the attention of those having to do with the government of our Canadian Royal Military College, whose cadets have not in the past been noted for proficiency in rifle or revolver shooting, or special interest in it.

The conditions of recruiting for the Russian Army have undergone considerable modification during the last few weeks. By the law of 1874 the term of military service for which every citizen was liable extended from the twentieth to the fortieth year. The first six years were spent with the colours, the next nine in the Reserve, and the remaining five in the Opoltschenie—a force corresponding to the German Landsturm. In time of peace the Russian conscript was called to the colours on completing his twenty-first year, if he failed to escape active service by drawing a fortunate number in the annual lottery. About 800,000 annually become liable for service. Of these, 30,000 illegally evade their military obligations, and 390,000 are exempted from service with the colours during peace on domestic and other grounds. The latter are drafted directly into the Opoltschenie, and held available for service in case of need. The annual contingent—the strength of which is determined by the War Minister—is selected by lot from the remaining 380,000. This contingent has been rapidly increasing during the last fifteen years. In 1874 it amounted to 145,000, in 1880 it had risen to 230,000, and since