

The Curious Statistics of the Military Matches.

THROUGH the courtesy of the statistical officer, Lt-Col. D. Torrance Fraser, we are enabled to supplement our report of last week by giving the details of the scores made in the skirmishing and volley firing competitions at the P.Q.R.A. prize meeting just held at Ottawa.

With the manner of carrying out the skirmishing match, no fault was or could well be found. The conditions laid down were quite satisfactory, and no opportunity was afforded of varying them to suit the whim of anybody. The firing, which was at unknown distances varying from 450 to 200 yards, and had to be done within fifteen seconds after the target appeared in view—the men being on the march in each case—was very good so far as the leading teams were concerned, and the number of hits, gradually diminishing down to the low figure of 8 out of 50 shots, are about in proportion to the experience of the teams in this kind of shooting. The top teams are nearly all veterans in these competitions; the bottom teams tyros, in many cases without a definite idea of the proper sighting of their rifles at the irregular distances. The teams each consisted of five members, who fired ten shots apiece. A hit on the lowest division of the target—4 ft. wide and 2 ft. 6 in. high—counted 5 points; on the centre division 3 points, and on the topmost 2 points. Thus reckoned the scores were:

	Lower.	Centre.	Upper.	Total hits.	Total points.
\$30 43rd Bn. 1st team	17	5	3	25	106
25 6th Fusiliers, 1st team	10	10	0	20	80
20 G. G. F. G., 2nd team	11	6	2	19	77
15 5th Royal Scots	12	5	1	18	77
8th Royal Rifles, 2nd team	13	3	0	16	74
“ “ 1st team	11	4	1	16	69
13th Battalion	12	0	3	15	66
G. G. F. G., 1st team	10	3	2	15	63
6th Fusiliers, 2nd team	10	3	0	13	59
43rd Battalion, 2nd team	6	4	2	12	48
54th Battalion	7	2	3	12	47
43rd Battalion, No. 6 Co.	8	2	0	10	46
60th Battalion	5	4	3	12	43
1st P. W. R.	5	2	1	8	33

THE SO-CALLED VOLLEY FIRING.

The scores of the combination of independent, feu de joie, and volley firing which were allowed to pass muster for the last named, are worth careful attention. This was at the proclaimed distance of 300 yards, from the knee position, and with the same targets and scoring as in the skirmishing. The five men constituting the team fired five shots apiece—25 in all. Many of the teams being composed exclusively of first-class shots, it was to be expected that some of them would secure a hit for every shot fired, and that the average of the leaders would not be far below this. Yet it is found that the highest number of hits made by any team was 12 out of the 25! And the average number of hits for the whole fourteen sections is only the average of the hits made skirmishing at unknown distances. This result would be surprising to anyone not a witness of the performance, or a competitor; but it may safely be attributed to the absurdly brief time allowed by the officer in charge between the commands “present” and “fire.” In future competitions of this character it would be well to have borne in mind that there is a radical difference in the time requisite for firing a parade volley with blank cartridge, and firing a volley with ball cartridge with the idea of hitting an object three hundred yards distant.

The list of deductions arbitrarily made by the officer in charge will also prove interesting reading. The only authorized deduction was 3 points for each shot fired out of time; and it is astonishing how in the face of this distinct proclamation, never repealed, a prize list has been issued on the basis of deductions of 1, 2, 4 or 5 points! We have reason to believe that not only was there a failure to make the stipulated deductions for untimely shots; but going to the other extreme the officer in charge created new causes of offence; and, for instance, spying a com-

petitor with the butt of his rifle rather close to his shoulder before the word “present” was given, deducted for this irregularity as much as if not a shot of the succeeding volley had been in time! Three members of a certain team actually fired before the command for one of the volleys was given. Speechless with astonishment at their lightning rapidity in anticipating his command, the officer proceeded with the next section without having given it at all, and the other two men of the team consequently did not fire. The three shots fired do not appear to have been disallowed, and the total deductions from the score of this team for the whole performance appear as only *three* points. The following are details of the scores of the fourteen teams which took part:

	Lower.	Centre.	Upper.	Total hits.	Value.	Arbitrary deduction.	Net score.
\$20 8th Royal Rifles, 2nd team	8	4	0	12	52	2	50
15 G. G. F. G., 1st team	8	4	0	12	52	5	47
10 5th Royal Scots	6	4	0	10	42	1	41
6th Fusiliers, 1st team	6	3	1	10	41	2	39
G. G. F. G., 2nd team	6	1	3	10	39	3	36
13th Battalion	5	2	2	9	35	4	31
43rd Battalion, 1st team	5	1	1	7	30	2	28
43rd “ No. 6 Co.	3	4	0	7	27	1	26
8th Royal Rifles, 1st team	5	0	0	5	25	0	25
6th Fusiliers, 2nd team	2	4	1	7	24	3	21
54th Battalion	2	2	2	6	20	1	19
43rd Battalion, 2nd team	2	2	1	5	18	2	16
60th Battalion	4	0	0	4	20	5	15
1st P. W. R.	0	4	1	5	14	3	11

Before dropping the subject, we will give those interested another conundrum to ponder over. In the prize list first published, the Prince of Wales Rifles were at the top, with a total of 51 points. The deduction from this team was 3 points, so that to leave a net total of 51 there must have been a target score of 54 made by the team whose target was inadvertently credited to the P. W. R. But the list printed above shows that the highest target total was 52. The Prince of Wales Rifles would only have had a total of 49 points, had the 3 been deducted, and their place on the list would have been second, not first. An explanation of this discrepancy would appear to be in order.

We believe there cannot be found anywhere a fairer or more conscientious body of men than the executive of the Province of Quebec Rifle Association. They have at all times shown a disposition to do everything in their power to satisfy the competitors, and to give to every man and every team an equal chance. Prize meetings under their direction are models in the matter of management, and not a few of the recent praiseworthy innovations in connection with the Dominion meetings have originated with the Quebec executive. It seems therefore to have been singularly unfortunate that there should be associated with a meeting under their direction a bungle such as that dealt with above; a bungle which presents a worse appearance the more it is investigated. We trust that as the result of the discovery so unexpectedly made at the eleventh hour, steps will be taken to ensure that the person or persons whose culpable negligence or indifference brought about such lamentable results will not again have an opportunity to give a setback to the lately growing popularity of these military matches.

The New Commandant of the R. M. C.

Sketch of the Career and Public Services of Major General Cameron.

(Canadian Gazette, 2nd August.)

As we stated last week, Major-General Cameron has been appointed by the Dominion Government to succeed General Oliver in the command of the Royal Military College at Kingston. The new commandant, it is of interest to note, comes of a family whose members have long taken a foremost part in the service of the Queen, as many as nine of his uncles and three of his brothers having been officers in the British navy and army. Born in Dingwall, Ross-shire, and educated in Dingwall, at King's College School, London, in France, and at University College, London, Major-General Donald Roderick Cameron was commissioned in the Royal Artillery in March, 1856, and has seen much active service, as may be judged from the following brief record:—

1859.—Selected to join the School of Gunnery on its first formation. Adjutant of the Royal Artillery at Alderney, at the time one of the most strongly fortified places in the British dominions during its re-armament.
1860-1862.—Instructor in Gunnery of the 15th Brigade, R.A., on its first organization. Adjutant at Fort Elson.