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NOTE AND COMMENT.

We commend attention to the letter in this issue on the subject of the Canadian Military Rifle League. The principle of our correspondent's suggestions we have already advocated on several occasions, and the experience of the past two seasons shows how unsatisfactory it is to award competitive prizes for other than shoulder to shoulder shooting.

The correspondence reproduced from the Toronto press shows the position of affairs with respect to the long threatened closing of the Garrison Common rifle range. A great deal of energy has been devoted to the examination of new sites, while the problem of whether or not the present range can be made safe seems to have been neglected. We believe that it can be made as safe as any range in the country, at an expense no greater than that which will fall upon the Government and the riflemen (more heavily on the latter) should a far distant range be chosen.

The Queen's Own Rifles have formed an athletic association, and as one outcome, an inter-regimental athletic tournament is already mooted. The idea is one which ought to be encouraged. Military and athletic exercises may be closely associated, with great benefit to the participants. The athlete should make the best soldier, and a young man with military training is most likely to have learned those lessons of self-control, indispensable to pleasant and profitable participation in athletics. The advantage of military and athletic combination have been strongly forced upon our attention of late, and in next issue we will have something more to say on this subject, in inaugurating a department to be devoted to such athletic sports as the members of our militia may profitably indulge in.

THAT MATTER OF PRECEDENCE.

The recently published article in which we referred to the anomalous course pursued with respect to the precedence intended to be conferred on the 48th Battalion, Highlanders, now in process of organization in Toronto, having drawn attention to the irregularity of the General Order, a supplementary Order may be expected shortly. It is to be hoped that this will not be in the nature of an aggravation of the no doubt unintended slight offered to the many fine regiments organized during the past quarter of a century, though explanations offered through the daily press make it appear that the intention actually was to ante-date the new organization to 1866.

In the list published of the corps whose precedence would suffer through giving effect to such intention, we included the Fifth Royal Scots of Montreal, on the assumption made without reflection that their seniority dated only from 12th April, 1872, when the regiment as now existing was organized; but a perusal of the General Order of that date shows that the Royal Scots are not affected. It reads:—

“5th Battalion, Royal Light Infantry, Montreal.—Adverting to General Orders (14) 2nd June, 1871, and (18) 12th August, 1871, the 5th Battalion, ‘Royal Light Infantry,’ Montreal, is hereby authorized to be reorganized, and will be reinstated in its former position and precedence in the Active Militia of the Dominion.”

The old regiment had been disbanded only a few months previously, and it was natural that when a number of its former members found themselves in a position to organize anew on a more satisfactory basis, they should have been granted the privilege of re-instatement in the much prized seniority before enjoyed, for the disbanded regiment had its origin, officially, in a General Order dated 31st January, 1862. The latter, rather than the date of reorganization given in the Militia List, is that from which the Royal Scots take seniority.

Their case, however, cannot be well taken as a reason for the action in that of the 48th Highlanders, to which we have taken exception. There is absolutely no similarity in the circumstances. Instead of the re-organization of a regiment by former members, a few months after official disbandment, we have an entirely new corps created at a place hundreds of miles distant from the headquarters of that, defunct for ten years, whose number it is to bear. This new corps has absolutely no claim to favour at the expense of any others. The fact that the promoters are influential men of the highest standing, in a chief city of the Dominion, and that that city may be entitled to a larger share of military favours than enjoyed in the past, are excellent arguments to use in support of applications for financial assistance; but in a purely sentimental matter such as this particular question of precedence, the considerations should be of a different nature.

No doubt the order of a few weeks ago had its origin in a misunderstanding of the situation. As we have already pointed out that part of it purporting to assign precedence is irregular and of no effect, being in direct contravention of the “Regulations and Orders.” Further action in this respect being therefore called for, we have given prominence to the matter, with a view to securing the most careful official consideration.