

# THE CANADIAN MILITIA GAZETTE

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

Fourth Year.  
VOL. III, No. 61.

OTTAWA, THURSDAY, 30th AUGUST, 1888.

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

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"Franc Tireur," the European correspondent of *Shooting and Fishing* (late *The Rifle*), of Boston, has a very interesting letter in the last number concerning the recent Wimbledon meeting. Here is a quotation: "Other phenomenal results there were, particularly some extraordinary ties with the highest possibles, and there were coincidences in which the present and future Queens of England are concerned, the former firing the first shot at the first meeting and the latter the last at the last meeting; but these and some of the scientific inventions produced at the meeting must stand over for the present. But there was one incident which so remarkably connected the last meeting with the first that I cannot resist mentioning it. It has always been the practice at a Wimbledon distribution of prizes to reserve for the final flourish the name of the winner of the Queen's prize, and to call on first the winners of the smaller prizes. Almost the first person called to appear before Her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales, the other day, was that very Edward Ross, who in 1860 was called upon last. In 1888 he won a small prize of less than \$40 with a score of 47 points out of a possible 48, with a double-barrelled shooting rifle used in the Martin Smith competition, firing at a three-inch bull's-eye; and in 1860 he was the hero of the hour,—the winner of the Wimbledon blue ribbon and \$1,250, with a score of 24 out of a possible 60 points on a target two feet in diameter, which was all bull's-eye.

Having further dwelt upon the improvement in the shooting, Franc Tireur thus moralizes: "What has produced so wonderful a change? Have not the best of our riflemen passed in the interval of 29 years from the A B C of rifle shooting to almost the acme of perfection, and have we not in the interval got in place of gas tubes weapons which are very nearly perfect? Can any one be found to deny that it is mainly to the meetings of the National Rifle Association at Wimbledon that these grand results are attributable? Unfortunately there can. Even among our legislators persons can be found who practically deny it. A famous book was once written upon the 'Curiosities of Literature.' If any one will write one on the 'Curiosities of Ingratitude' I could undertake to add a chapter to show how curious it is that a landowner who has pocketed a million of dollars by the improved value of his property through the proximity of the National Rifle Association, and the commanding officer of a regiment (the Queen's Westminster) that has just attained the highest possible honour through its ministrations, should of all men be the most ready to decry that association, question its utility and sneer at its zeal."

Here is still another Wimbledon paragraph, for the benefit of our Canadian volunteer cyclists: "The last day of the Wimbledon meeting was marked by an important novelty—the cyclists competition. The

contest was open to sections of four from each battalion, whose business it was to ride about six-sevenths of a mile, and to fire ten rounds at 450 yards, eight minutes being the limit of time for the completion of the course. The team from Coventry, representing the 2nd Warwick, and mounted on a Victoria four-in-hand, succeeded in winning the first prize, while to the London Rifle Brigade was awarded second." Commenting on the event, an English paper says: "Seeing that the natural employment of cyclists in warfare would be to act as scouts, messengers and so forth, and that the skilful use of the rifle on occasion of surprise and emergency would be of great advantage, the competition introduced at the meeting on Saturday was of distinct value."

## A New Plan Wanted.

WORKED upon a system long out of date, the prize meetings of the Ontario rifle association have of late years earned the reputation of being about the worst managed and least attractive in the Dominion. To begin with, the prizes are poor in comparison, and are not so distributed as to reward really superior scoring, a difference of twenty-five or thirty places on the list bringing no corresponding difference in the prize. But this is only a minor complaint, the burden of the competitors' grievances being the confusion attendant upon competition for the rewards. At Wimbledon, and with wide-awake associations in Canada, it has long been the custom to exactly time every competitor for the entire meeting, to tell him as soon as his register tickets are issued the precise moment at which he has to be at the firing point designated. Non-attendance means forfeiture of his right to shoot, and the competitor is seldom absent. The introduction of some such system was asked for by resolution passed at the annual meeting of members of the association this week, and it is to be hoped that the council will see fit to give effect to this recommendation.

The management of the extra series targets is another fertile source of complaint, especially in connection with the early morning shooting. Whilst many are able to prove their elevation and windage at these extra targets, before proceeding to shoot in the regular matches, the majority cannot secure the opportunity, and are thereby heavily handicapped. This is all the more serious when the squadding is so arranged—as it has been this year—that the same men fire first every day. For subsequent matches it does not so much matter, but if all cannot have an opportunity to fire extra series before commencing on the regular programme, it would be only fair to keep the extra targets closed until the first regular match is over.

The marking has been exasperatingly slow, causing no end of worry to competitors anxiously watching for their shots to be signalled. The system of signalling appears to be at fault. If the marker, instead of waiting until he can locate the shot and place the marking disc, were allowed to lower the target the moment struck, it would not only save time, and the competitors suspense, but there would be less likelihood of erratic marking.

And when in spite of all obstacles a match has been shot, the issue of the prize list should be the work of half an hour, not half a day, or