

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

(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.)

D. R. A. TEAMS.

EDITOR MILITIA GAZETTE,—I notice a letter in your issue of the 9th, signed "Young Shot," advocating a change in the present system of naming the members of teams in the D.R.A. before the matches, and as another young shot I should like to give some of my views on the subject and against such a change.

Ottawa is not the place for a man to prove his ability to represent his corps in any team match, ample opportunity being furnished at the Battalion Association and P. R. A. matches.

Again, it would not be fair to the corps stationed at a long distance from Ottawa, who on that account cannot get more than ten and some even five men to attend the matches, to be pitted against Q.O.R., 43rd, Vics., etc., who have from 30 to 40 men each; the corps thus having a larger representation would therefore have an advantage of about 3 to 1 over corps stationed in more distant parts of the Dominion.

Young Shot imagines he would receive a great benefit from this change, which, in order to get, he must also change another rule, namely, allow coaching, which would be hardly the thing when we are competing for individual as well as team prizes.

He is also "deprived of half the incentive," and *relieved of any unnecessary anxiety to score.*

Surely the young shot needs no greater incentive than the record of such men as Mitchell, Ogg and others to go and do likewise, and to mark, learn and inwardly digest the host of little points he comes across every time he goes to the ranges.

Experience teaches, and we, the young shots, all get an experience at Ottawa, and the sooner Young Shot learns to stand on his own footing, the better for himself.

Speaking of men with lower scores on teams, than those made by others shooting at the same time, winning badges, there is no reason why a young untried shot who occasionally makes a good score should be given a badge over the head of a man who occasionally makes a bad score, or in other words, get a badge for a fluke.

If Young Shot bucks up and shows his determination to "win his spurs" or his bulls-eyes, he will not find that "combination of old shots" slow to take hold of him and give him all he is entitled to.

He has plenty of time, and if he strives manfully, and does not let his first appearance be his last, will one day fill the place of some old warrior, and bring honour and glory to his corps as his predecessors have done.

Hoping I have not trespassed too much on your space.

I am, yours,

YOUNG BLUENOSE . HOT.

Halifax, N.S., April 15, '91.

EDITOR MILITIA GAZETTE,—I see in this week's GAZETTE a letter from Major Garrison of Halifax, on team matches in the D. R. A., at which I am very much surprised, as he admits that the teams are chosen by favouritism, and from his letter I should think he approves of it, as he says further down in his letter, "I am of opinion that the Dominion of Canada match as carried out at present, is a very fair test of the shooting strength of our battallions." Now, how can it be a "fair test," when he admits that the men on the teams get there by being favourites, instead of being chosen on their merit. I think that if the D. R. A. adopted the proposed change, he and many others would have less trouble to get their best shots to go to Ottawa, as they

would then have a chance of winning part of the team money, without being under any obligation to the chooser, as at present is the case. He also says, "it would be something new in rifle shooting." I should think this was a point in its favour, as all improvements must be new.

I have been thinking over what "Young Shot" has said, and must say I think he put it very mildly when he said, "it was one combination of old shots shooting against another" for in many instances it is favouritism (and that only) that gets your name on a team, thereby allowing you the privilege of competing, and under a just rule this should not be possible.

At present the success of a team depends on the ability of the chooser to select men who can make their largest score, in that particular weather, rather than the ability of the men themselves, and in this case would it not be better and more just to give the prize to the chooser instead of to their men who compose the team. Then let us look at the individual prize list of the D. of C. Match and see how many men of the winning team are in it, in some cases two or three, the remainder of the team being carried through by some bare (and perhaps fluke) score and the prize is given them, for they have not won it, in my estimation.

If I am not mistaken the association was formed and is assisted by the government to encourage rifle shooting in general, and not to assist pot hunters and cliques.

Then, let us look at the advantages to be gained by the change: 1st, the regiment sending the largest number of good shots will have the best chance of winning; 2nd, this will increase the attendance and entrance fees; 3rd, the best and most deserving men will win on their own personal ability; 4th, the value of the badges and prizes will rise accordingly. At present there is no special pride for a man to have a badge, as it may have been won for him by the other members of the team; 5th, the young shots would get all the assistance possible from the older shots, and this alone would approach nearer the object of the association than at present, for old shots now have nothing to gain and everything to lose by teaching and giving advice to young shots, and it is on the present young shots that the future success of the association must depend. I should like to ask of some of the dissenting members of the D. R. A. Council, to give their reasons for voting against the proposed change, which I see by your report was brought up but defeated. I must now close, thanking your for and hoping I have not taken up too much space in your valuable paper to riflemen.

ASSOCIATED MEMBER D. R. A.

Toronto, April 20, 1891.

ALL COMERS AT THE D.R.A.

EDITOR MILITIA GAZETTE,—Don't you think it is time that the D.R.A. opened its matches to "all comers." The writer happens to be so fixed that it is impossible for him to belong to a militia corps, but in his younger days learned to shoot a Snider in the militia and would like to go in for rifle shooting again. Keep say the Grand Aggregate and Bisley team competition open only to volunteers and have an "All Comers' Aggregate," the same as they do in the Old Country, and I venture to say that there would be at least one hundred new faces seen at Ottawa next September. I see great exertions are being made to encourage rifle shooting, and I think that the D.R.A. should do what they can to encourage civilians, as we are all liable in case of trouble and might as well learn how to use the rifle beforehand.

CURLIAN.

[NOTE.—At the meeting of 1890, there were fourteen matches open to all comers, including an aggregate for teams; and only two individual matches, besides the aggregate, were restricted to the military.—EDITOR.]