

CFO/RANGE OPERATORS SEMINAR

September 13, 2014-09-11

Georgian College

Good morning ladies and gentlemen

We were surprised to receive the invitation from Peter to speak here today. We were, and are, pleased to see that the CFO must have an interest in the shooting sports.

Introduction – Shari, Louise, me

If you have questions, please make note and we will provide a question period later.

Sometimes we must look back in time to see what the future might be. History sometimes has value.

The year 2015 is fast approaching. Eight (800) hundred years ago in the year 1215, King John of England signed the Magna Charta, the foundation of our law today. At the same time the Sheriff of Nottingham was pursuing the wily Robin Hood who was poaching the King's deer. Shooting competitions, archery of course, were commonplace even then.

The same pressures and influences that affect us today were present then as now – demographics – people and space in conflict. How have other countries adapted?

Today, 800 years later, the shooting sports are alive and well in our founding nations, Great Britain and France as well as in many other nations. To see what many other countries have in the way of shooting facilities is an enlightening and humbling experience.

Great Britain

The famous Bisley ranges of which many of you may have heard about are 20 miles west of London. Bisley is, in fact, a village consisting of Pavilions belonging to most of the Military regiments of Great Britain. These are home to the representatives of each respective British regiment during competitions held there. There are 25 yard to 1200 yard ranges as well as shotgun facilities. This facility was in place during the 1860's.

Warwick – The Muzzle Loading World Championships were held there in 1998 in newly completed ranges. There were 50 positions at 25 meter, 50 positions at 50 meters and 25 positions at 100 meters, EXCLUSIVELY FOR MUZZLE LOADING SHOOTING.

In 1998, I was in an airgun store in Birmingham, estimated to be 30 x 40 ft. in size with airguns, mostly rifles hanging on 3 walls. I only recognized one and wondered what the rest were for, the answer, "Airgun Field Target". I asked how many people participated in it. The answer, "over 30,000 registered but that is only a fraction of those who actually shoot it". To the best of my knowledge, there are two clubs in Ontario where airgun field target is shot, Elmira and Port Colborne. Airgun Field Target originated in Great Britain for the purpose of hunter training but it now is shot in many European Countries and the USA. Look on the internet for websites in most European countries.

Great Britain is about ¼ the area of Ontario and has approximately 4 x the population of Ontario. The descendents of Robin Hood are alive and well. The deer harvest in Great Britain is between 150,000 and 160,000 annually, about twice that of Ontario, not to mention the harvest of grouse, pheasants and waterfowl.

France – We shot in a World Muzzle Loading Championship in a range in the Palace of Versailles ground built in the 1860's. It had 10m airgun, 25m, 50m, 100m, 200m and 300m ranges, all enclosed in a brick wall – as well as an oak panelled dining room with crystal chandeliers, etc.

We also shot a World Championship at Bordeaux, France. The ranges were similar but it had two shotgun fields dedicated to international muzzle loading trap. Ontario, in fact Canada, has one at the Barrie Gun Club. I walked along the 50m line consisting of 50 targets. The target frames were made of wood, the target backers were ten test, each with a hole in the centre about the size of a coffee cup. These targets were used for 3P rifle, prone, kneeling and standing as well Olympic Free Pistol. I couldn't find a bullet mark in the frames and they had been there along time.

Italy – We shot a World Championship at Lucca, close to the Leaning Tower of Pizza. They had 10m airgun, 25m, 50m and 100m ranges enclosed in this facility in the middle of the city. In fact, one street width separated the range from houses on three sides.

Monte Catini – This shotgun facility had eight bunker shotgun fields in a row with skeet fields superimposed on the first six (6). The last two had ZEE-ZEE fields superimposed.

Spain – Grenada – The Canadian International Muzzle Loading Team is leaving next Saturday for a World Championship at Grenada, Spain. I have not seen the range but I do know that it has 60 positions convertible for 25m and 50m as well as airgun and shotgun facilities as well as parking for 600 vehicles. An ISSF (Olympic Events) World Championship is in progress there as we speak.

Similar facilities exist all over the world, except in Canada, including many of the former Soviet republics, India, Saudi Arabia, China, Malaysia, Japan, Australia, Brazil, Venezuela, Mexico. etc.

Observations of Interest

All of those ranges, with the exception of Warwick, had 10m airgun ranges.

Most, if not all, of those ranges had one or two bays set aside for sighting-in with a bench rest or a machine rest.

It is obvious that these ranges are more than just ranges. They have a social significance as well.

* In the 1990's, in Canada the federal and provincial governments expressed the view that participation in sport was beneficial to the health and well-being of Canadians.

2003 – In 2003, a Canadian Sport Ministers conference was held. From that conference a document entitled "The Canadian Sport Policy" was produced followed by another document

called the “Long Term Athlete Development/Sport for Life”. That documents relates to almost all Canadians and ALL SPORTS. It establishes Federal Govt. to Provincial Govt., Federal Sport Ministry (Sport Canada) to Provincial Sport Ministry (MTCR), Shooting Federation of Canada (NSO) to the OCS (PSO) to the respective disciplines.

The Ontario Council of Shooters consists of several disciplines:
OPTA (Ontario Provincial Trapshooting Association)
OSSA (Ontario Skeet Shooting Association)
MLIMLA (Maple Leaf International Muzzle Loading Association)
ORA (Ontario Rifle Association)
OOTA (Ontario Olympic Trapshooting Association)
ONTarget (currently a committee of the OCS covering smallbore rifle and pistol)

Many, if not most, of the clubs represented here today will have individual members involved with one or more of these disciplines.

The role of the OCS can best be described as to enhance Participation and Proficiency, to assist in the management, promotion and development of the Shooting Sports generally in Ontario, including Ontario Summer and Winter Games teams and the Canada Winter Games Teams.

I was at a seminar some years ago where a speaker said the following referring to all sports: Club memberships are a type of contract. The club accepts membership fees. The member has expectations. In the case of shooting, maybe only somewhere to shoot, maybe to become a better deer hunter or duck hunter, maybe to enhance his/her shooting skills to better compete at the club level or at the Olympic level, who knows. On the other side of the contract, the club has an obligation to help that member achieve his/her goals to the best of its ability to do so. Just providing facilities is not the limit of the club’s ability to assist its members.

The vast difference in the Shooting Sports overseas as compared to Canada may very well be expressed in a paragraph heading in the last issue of Ontario Out of Doors. It reads, “Marksmanship is EVERYTHING.”

With that thought in mind, I will turn you over to Louise.

In closing, we will leave you with some thoughts:

You, and those you represent, will determine the future of the Shooting Sports in Ontario and likely Canada as Ontario has 40% of the Canadian population.

It is a sociological axiom that you always proceed toward your most dominant thought. If the shooting community in Ontario were ever to act in concert, the result could be amazing.

We will open the floor for questions.