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*Union*

April 5, 1963

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NRA CONVENTION - 1963

The 92nd NRA Annual Meeting and Exhibit was held in the Sheraton Park Hotel, Washington, D.C., March 23 - 27, 1963. Although no attendance figures were available at the conclusion of the show, most observers rated this one as approaching the record-breaking 1962 conclave, when 16,000 spectators were clocked through the door.

Traditionally, this has been a rifleman's encampment for many years - a change was noted this year in increased numbers of shotgunners and handgun enthusiasts who were examining new developments in their favorite fields.

Every firearms manufacturer of consequence was represented in exhibit space - Browning, Colt, Daisy, Crosman, H & R, High Standard, Ithaca, Mossberg, Marlin, Savage, Smith & Wesson, Sturm-Ruger, Weatherby and Winchester were showing their wares.

Breda, Beretta, BSA, Dakin, LaSalle and Sako models were displayed by importers - a new entry, Anchutz, was showing target and sporting rifles in a company-manned booth.

The bulletmakers - Speer, Hornady and Sierra - were active with customers throughout the convention. Unertl, Savage, Weatherby, Williams, Redfield, Lyman and Bushnell headed up the optics department of the show.

The reloaders - MEC, Pacific, CH, Lyman, Magnumatic, RCBS, Santa Anita Engineering and Wichita were busy punching out primers, cases and shells.

Federal Cartridge Corporation displayed company products for the first time at this convention.

-2-

REMINGTON EXHIBIT

Our display incorporated a broad range of company products, past and present. A representative group of early Remington shotguns was tied in with the 1100, while the XP100 was shown with several one-of-a-kind antique handguns.

A full line of 22 caliber, centerfire, shotgun and target rifle models was lined up on the back-drop of the exhibit. The XP100, 1100 and models featuring the new 6mm caliber were highlighted for attention. The complete plastic shell display formed one end of our booth. DuPont's 'Hi Skor' division shared our space with a small showing of current shotgun, rifle and pistol powders. Representatives from the explosives department were on hand to answer questions and hand out literature - there was sustained interest on the part of handloaders.

The glass-free priming mix story, told with graphics and copy, was located on the aisle in front of the main exhibit. Accompanying brochures, which told the story of this development with its advantages to match rifle shooters, were distributed to customers.

Current models received their share of attention - the antiques were crowd pleasers and attracted much comment during the traffic hours. A more-than-ordinary amount of shooters' time at the booth was spent with the target rifles-the 40X is gaining acceptance as a champion's match gun.

Consensus of observers who stayed for the five days of the convention - the Remington exhibit enjoyed the heaviest numerical attendance of any spot in the hall.

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ENTERTAINMENT SUITE

Our entertainment room was crowded during the late afternoon and evening sessions. Stories of shooters and shooting, of bullets and ballistics and of old traditions and new developments were circulated freely. Many prominent outdoor writers, influential military people and just plain fellows from the back country were on hand.

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-3-

PRODUCT

The show-stopper of the 1963 convention, by a wide margin, was the XP100. Literally hundreds of shooters came back on the third day of the show after finding it impossible to see and handle this non-conventional gun in the huge press of the weekend traffic. Aisles were completely blocked on Saturday and Sunday - crowd movement was stopped for minutes at a time - in the Remington corner the XP100 was the main attraction. Bushnell and Redfield were displaying this pistol mounted with scopes - their people reported to us that the greatest amount of inquiries during the show centered around equipment for the XP100.

The 1100 received much attention, most of it favorable. Many shooters viewing the new shotgun had been pre-sold by outdoor writer articles.

A large number of customers were interested in the new 6mm caliber and wanted specific information about differences in the Remington 244 and the 6mm. These people were occupied with rifling twists, bullet weights and ballistics.

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SIGNIFICANT PRODUCT COMMENTS

The following comments were received in enough numerical quantity to carry weight - from a shooter preference standpoint:

- Q. Does Remington regard the 6mm as a better caliber than the 244?
- A. Not necessarily. Depends on whether you're interested in a varmint or hunting caliber. (Explanations were made here, in some detail, about twist, bullet weight and interchangeability.)
- Q. What will be the primary use for the XP100?
- A. Varmint shooting - with a scope.
- Q. Will you discontinue the 58 now that the 1100 is available?
- A. Yes - gauge for gauge - the 58 will be dropped as the new guns come along. The 12 gauge has been discontinued as of now. (A number of shooters disagreed with this action - particularly in regard to the 12 gauge.)

-4-

- Q. When will the 20 gauge version of the 1100 be available?
- A. January 1, 1964.
- Q. The 1100 feels substantially heavier than the 58 - what's the story?
- A. Less than 1/2 lb. - the balance is slightly forward on the 1100 which improves pointing and hold-down characteristics.
- Q. Does Remington plan to produce the 1100 in 5 gauges?
- A. Yes, eventually.
- Q. Will Remington offer the 700 varmint calibers with 24" barrels?
- A. No plans at present. (This answer was decided on before the convention; most opinions were that we shouldn't tip our hand in this direction at the moment.)
- Q. What's the primary difference between the 58 and the 1100? (This question, with variations, was asked hundreds of times. Most questioners were interested in having the new gas escapement, construction features, checkering, new finish and other points explained to them in detail.)
- A. We gave the complete story, whenever time allowed.
- Q. What's the 40X International Free rifle used primarily for? Will the use of this type of gun be expanded as tournament rules are revised?
- A. You'll see more and more of these rifles on the line - some NRA definitions have been expanded to include this type - the free rifle is the ultimate in accuracy tools.
- Q. Tell me about the XP100 and the 'Fireball' cartridge.
- A. (This was the most oft repeated request of the show - the shooters wanted to hear about pistol construction, barrel bedding or free floating, linkage between action and trigger, universal grip, trigger, vent rib and balance. They were extremely interested in the 221 cartridge, its development, ballistics, accuracy, (we had representative targets on display), reloadability, down range characteristics and ultimate use in other fields. We had thousands (or so it seemed) of requests for a sample cartridge. (The 500 we brought with us lasted, by careful allocation, for 3 days.)

-5-

- Q. Do you plan to make a single shot varmint rifle chambered for the 221? (Remington people at the show were surprised at the number of times this question was repeated.)
- A. No plans at present. (After this question became repetitive, we questioned many people about this. Most said, "If Remington developed a single shot varmint rifle on this action and used the 221, geared to sell for not much over \$100, we feel you'd have a winner.") A number of shooters told us that they plan to buy an XP100 and convert it to a rifle for varmint activity.

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Winchester was telling the new 22 caliber rifle series story on a 5 minute continuous projector film - main verbal pitch at the W - W exhibit was about the over and under shotgun import.

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(Editorial note)

The advance publicity generated around the 1100 and XP100 paid off large dividends at the convention. The time and attention given to the outdoor writers' fraternity in exposure sessions can be measured in tangible return to this company, assuming our product is newsworthy. This program has given us hundreds of pages of valuable editorial copy. Shooters believe what they read in the verticals and other specialized magazines - they often question our claims, although legitimate, in company-sponsored ads.

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The 1963 NRA Convention provided a deep sampling of shooters' likes and dislikes - in addition, it offered all exhibitors the opportunity to show company products to the most important fellow of all, the man on the street.

