



The Volunteer Review

AND MILITARY AND NAVAL GAZETTE.

A Journal Devoted to the Interests of the Military and Naval Forces of the Dominion of Canada

VOL. V.

OTTAWA, CANADA, MONDAY, OCTOBER 16, 1871.

No. 42.

THE AUTUMNAL MANOUVRES OF THE BRITISH ARMY.—NO. 1.

(From the Broad Arrow.)

The Act to make provision for facilitating the manœuvres of troops in the forthcoming campaign, received the royal assent on the day of prorogation. The preamble recites that the assemblage is to take place for military instruction within the area mentioned in the statute, and compensation is to be made to persons whose lands may be damaged by the passage of the troops. The area is limited by a boundary line starting from Loddonbridge, from Reading to Wokingham, over the river Loddon at certain parts specified, through Godalming to Guildford, near Staines, thence to Loddon bridge again. Within these limits the forces may pass over land, may encamp, dig trenches, &c., but are not to interfere with gardens, crops, farmyards, parks or pleasure grounds. Full compensation is to be given by moneys to be provided for by Parliament for any damage done by the forces. A commission is to make regulations as to the passage over lands, and a court of arbitration is to determine the compensation to be awarded. The court of arbitration is not bound to hear council or attorney on the claims. There are regulations as to persons not belonging to the forces committing offences, and the punishment is described. The Act also provides for the appointment of a constabulary force to repress offences. The Act is to continue in force, as to the occupation of lands, to the 1st October, and as to compensation for damage, to the 1st July 1872, "and no longer."

During the week not a day has passed without the arrival of some regiment destined to take part in the campaign. On all the surrounding commons a wide extent of canvas has been springing up as if by the touch of enchantment, and from any commanding eminence in the neighborhood there may be seen hundreds of white snowy tents arranged in orderly rows, with martial figures engaged at drill or on fatigue duty, moving about with busy animation. The division under Lieutenant General Sir J. Hope Grant, G. C. B. is probably at the present moment about 34,000 strong. The Militia regiments are encamped at Bramley Bottom, on Cove-common, and in the south Camp. The men are for the most part of good *physique*, and appear to possess all the requisite qualifications for making good soldiers, taking quite naturally to the duties of camp life, and what some would consider real hardship.

As the ground selected for the manœuvres the area embraced by the schedule

of the bill recently placed before the House of Commons is extensive enough; but it appears to have been selected mainly from having for its centre Aldershot Camp. The south-western side of the area takes in a portion of Hampshire and the borders of the western division of the county of Surrey, and comprises some of the wildest districts in the south of England. That portion known as Woolmer forest is an extensive tract of Crown land abounding in dense pine woods, and here and there small patches of open land. This particular part is well known to the troops at Aldershot, as it has usually been selected by the divisional commanders at the camp for the purpose of flying columns. The road to it is past the Queen's Pavilion at Aldershot to Farnham, and thence to Alice Holt Forest, past the spot where a few years since stood the famous Buckshorn Oak. Altogether, the distance from Aldershot Camp is from twelve to sixteen miles, according to a particular part selected, and that portion which is usually occupied by flying columns is as wild a spot as well could be imagined. A narrow by-way leads over a little rivulet to a valley sequestered and picturesque. The hills are crowned with the ever-present pines, which throw their shadows over the running stream at their base, and heighten the impression of beauty and solitude which the place leaves upon the mind. Here we have seen a battery of artillery, a regiment of cavalry, and two or three infantry regiments encamped, and enjoying all the rude pleasures of life in the open fields with a zest that dwellers in cities could hardly imagine. On one side of this pretty valley stands an old substantially built cottage, closely hidden by sheltering trees. But this house or cottage in the wood, like a certain famous residence in the battle-field of France, has received a visit from royalty, for in 1859 Her Majesty the Queen, while reviewing the troops in this locality in company with the Prince Consort, retired to it for rest, and also to see the son—himself an old soldier—of Sergeant Graham, of Peninsula fame. This spot is about two miles from a railway station, and it has generally been the custom, when engaging the troops in active work, to take them a distance, of some four or five miles in the direction of Selborne (associated with the memory of Gilbert White, the naturalist) before getting to ground suitable for movements. Beyond a small common here and there, it is rather questionable whether facilities for carrying out really extensive military manœuvres can be found without taking up cultivated ground, but inasmuch as this very district would be one of the first to be occupied by an invad-

ing army marching from Portsmouth to London, it is unquestionably important that the troops should be acquainted with the physical conformation of the ground which it is just within the bounds of possibility they may be hereafter be required to defend. The northern area of the intended operations, comprising Easthampstead, Hartfordbridge Flats, Sandhurst, and Chobham, is pretty well known to the general public, and it is enough to state that it possesses all the varied features which military commanders esteem. The water supply of the latter place has been carefully examined by General Sir Hope Grant, and is found to be adequate for at least 15,000 men.

It has been calculated that 1100 men must be left at Aldershot to provide the divisional brigade and regimental sentries of infantry battalions quartered in huts and barracks, and to insure those duty men having four nights in bed. The apparent actual number—based on a plan of sentries which will be sent to general officers—is 840, allowing that of the duty men six per cent, may be sick. Of this number the 1st Brigade will furnish 400 men, the 2nd Brigade 300, and the 3rd Brigade 400. Regimental arrangements for the protection of all property (public and private) must be made by the senior officers of Artillery, Cavalry, Control, and other departments during the absence of the troops from Aldershot. Regimental returns are to be sent through general officers commanding brigades to the Assistant Adjutant General's office by ten a.m. this day, showing the number of officers, non-commissioned officers, and soldiers to take part in the manœuvres; the number of duty men, recruits, casualties, and sick staying at Aldershot; the number of horses out, and the number of recruits, duty men, casualties, and sick belonging to affiliated depots.

A considerable number of the metropolitan police, both mounted and on foot, will accompany the troops. All the mounted inspectors and patrols have been paraded, and the most suitable men and horses selected for the duty, while the constables who will have to do duty on foot will be chosen after an examination as to their health and power of endurance. It is not probable, however, that they will have to march from place to place with the troops, a number of waggons having been provided by the War Department for their conveyance, as their services will be required outside the encampment at night, as well as keeping the spectators of the manœuvring within proper bounds. Ambulance waggons, store waggons, tents, and other necessaries have been prepared for their use at the Royal Arsenal,