

active service, should be done away with. We will now consider what are the forms and formalities that may be advantageously dispensed with. The length of time spent on parade previous to marching off might well be shortened by falling the men in at once on the battalion parade in quarter column, and by abolishing the equalizing of companies and exact sizing of men. The men ought merely to know whereabouts in a company they ought to fall in, whether in the centre or on the flanks. The inspection of arms might take place at some other time of the day, at the company commanders' choice, the men parading for a few minutes only in fatigue dress, with their rifles, for the purpose. Everything should be done to shorten the weary time spent on the parade before drill begins. The battalion is broken off on the battalion parade and why should it not be assembled there. Companies will not be equal on active service, and working with unequal companies is a good training; arms get dirtied by drill and marching from dust, etc., and, consequently, it is much better that they should be inspected an hour or two after drill than before it. Then the formalities of marching past and inspection can be much simplified by having the march past done in quarter column only, and the men drawn up in the same formation for inspection by the general. There is an immense amount of time wasted in teaching troops to march past in column of double companies with the rear rank (of a two-deep line) unnaturally locked up, with all the details of when to shoulder arms and when to trail, when the officers are to salute, what number of paces to take during the salute, etc., etc., all of which are formalities utterly useless in war and only intended for show. In the same manner a long line formation with officers out in front for inspection is only a formality. The use of markers during drill manoeuvres should be abolished, as they are never used on active service, and much time is lost teaching markers their ever changing positions, which is not worth retaining. The varying positions of the right and left guides and markers are a constant source of error and annoyance, while they are not of the slightest use now-a-days. Officers ought invariably, except when leading a bayonet charge or rush forward, to be in rear of their men, no officer should appear in the ranks, their place is in rear of their men. Men should always be accustomed to commands from the rear. An officer in the front rank not only takes a rifle away from it, but he cannot superintend the fire without leaving his place. The flanks of companies can well be marked by sergeants. Now-a-days when cavalry is so impotent against a cool and collected infantry even in dispersed order the necessity of guiding flanks, etc., which were instituted from fear of cavalry in the days of the old short-range, flint-lock, muzzle-loading rifle so as to always rapidly form an even line against a sudden cavalry charge, no longer exists, and also there is no necessity for the constant change of places of officers and markers, which forms almost the whole difficulty of battalion drill. But "spit and polish" should always be strictly enforced to make the men take a pride in themselves and to instil discipline and smartness into them. Strict attention to details is the secret of creating and raising the *moral* of troops, which result is not due to the mere formations used at drill, as so many think. In modern warfare the fixing of bayonet is unnecessary on the line of march or at drill, except in the attack just before the charge. In such a case both bayonet and sword bayonets would be fixed and only one manual exercise would be required for the army instead of two as at present. The manual exercise for the army should be, for preference, like that for rifle battalions, because the words of command agree most nearly with what is done (a very important fact) and it is more easily learnt.\* The manual should only consist of the shoulder, present, slope, and charge bayonets, all being done with fixed bayonets. The bayonet exercise can also be made much simpler and more practical and effective by placing the left hand near the muzzle and in only lunging with the right hand, letting go of the rifle into the left during the lunge. This is the German method, and is more easily shown than explained. Only one lunge need be taught and how to guard it with sweeps of the bayonet or stock. This method is invariably used in sword vs. bayonet contests and forms the most powerful means of attack and defence. Forming up should be used in every case instead of wheeling; by forming up, a line can be far more rapidly formed than by wheeling while it is far more easily taught. Wheeling requires a great amount of time and trouble before it can be done so as to look well.† Another very important point which the writer has seen carried out with great success and with a marked improvement in the drill, is that all drill movements should be carried out with a tactical object in view, which is explained to the men before the movement is made so that the men can understand the why and the wherefore of what they are doing and execute it intelligently. Any change of position for any distance over 50 yards should be executed by company columns or

by fours; no advance should be made in line for longer distances except for a "charge" with fixed bayonets. The so-called close-order drill should be carried out in a freer manner by opening out the men more. The regulations state that each man is to occupy 24 inches in the ranks. This, however, is never done, or else there would be three inches between the men of a line, as a man only occupies 21 inches on an average. Our present close order, or 21 inches per man, is very unpractical in war, as in such close order the men cannot use their rifles with freedom, and when the line is two-deep the rear rank cannot fire without danger to the front rank. There were many cases in the late war in the Soudan in which the helmets of the front rank men were blown off by the rear rank men. All these details are very important. Frederick the Great said "love details, for they contain in them the elements of success." But the acceptance of such details as here given depend on the inspecting officer. It is a well known fact that the training a battalion receives depends entirely on the nature of the annual inspection, and if the inspecting officer demands formations and drill not suitable for war, the men will be trained to them. There are two slight alterations in our present practice that might be changed with advantage; one is that in the manner of carrying out the dressing of a line and of the diagonal march—each man should only be able to see the man next to him instead of the second man from him; and the other is that in all partial ( $\frac{1}{4}$ ,  $\frac{1}{2}$  or  $\frac{3}{4}$ ) turns, the rifle should be brought to the shoulder when it has been previously carried at the trail. It is difficult to conceive why each man in dressing should see the lower part of the face of second man from him; and in half turns to the right or left it will be found that the left and right flanks of a line, respectively, work forward when the rifle is at the trail, in order to prevent the rifle of one man interfering with the legs of the man next him, as it would otherwise do, if a proper line was kept.

A SOLDIER.

### Manitoba Rifle Association.

THE council have just published their annual report of the proceedings of the association for circulation amongst the members prior to the annual general meeting. It reads as follows:—

The council of the Manitoba rifle association have the honor to submit the fifteenth annual report of their proceedings, and in doing so have much pleasure in announcing a successful year in many respects.

At the time they were elected to office at the adjourned annual meeting held in March last, several important changes and additions were made in the constitution of the association, viz:—

1. Reducing the affiliation fee from \$20 to \$5, and giving the association silver medal to corps or associations affiliating.
2. Making five members a quorum at a council meeting instead of seven.
3. Dividing the office of secretary-treasurer and appointing these officers by the council instead of at the general annual business meeting.
2. Changing the date of the general annual business meeting from the 2nd Tuesday in January of each year to the 2nd Tuesday in March.
5. Calling a special general meeting of the members on the second day of the annual prize meeting.

All these changes have been carried out.

The by-laws were also amended, and with the constitution have been printed, and copies forwarded to all the members of the association.

The treasurer's detailed statement of the financial state of the association duly audited, is herewith submitted, together with the auditor's report for the year 1886.

The private donations were not as large as in the past few years, but such a surce of supply cannot be expected to be permanent, nor should the association be dependent on it.

The council, through their president, represented to the militia department the unequal grant which is accorded to us in comparison with the other provinces, and urged that a further appropriation be made for our association, on the ground that we are now only given an annual grant of \$500. Prince Edward Island and British Columbia get each the same amount as we do. The militia organisation of this province is in excess of these provinces unitedly.

Beyond this, examination of the prize lists of our association will show that they are far in excess of the smaller provinces and nearly approach the amounts offered by the provinces of Quebec and Ontario. The council have heard from the adjutant-general that their application is now under the consideration of the militia department.

There are now in Manitoba and the North-West Territories some fourteen (14) rifle associations, most of which will probably be represented at our next annual prize meeting, and the council consider that the increasing importance and usefulness of the association gives them every claim for favorable consideration from both the Dominion and Provincial governments.

\* The words *advance arms* do not convey the meaning of the movement attached to it and it is very hard to do well.

† In the writer's battalion, forming up is done on all occasions with great success, and is much better liked by the men than wheeling.