

The Western Scot

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 11th, 1915

SUBVERSIVE OF DISCIPLINE

It has always seemed strange that Canadian regiments, made up of such high-class fighting material as they every one of them assuredly are, should be held so long for training on arrival in the Old Land, but if what seems to transpire locally is any criterion of methods that obtain in the Canadian service generally the delay is not to be wondered at. Where one finds the officer commanding one unit freely and adversely discussing the commanding officer of another and later mobilized unit, it does not speak very highly for discipline, and without discipline an army is little better than an armed mob. This particular reflection is the result of personal observation some few months since, and was forcibly brought to mind again within the past few days by the case of a commanding officer of one unit taking a junior subaltern of another unit into his (unasked-for) confidence, and quite freely condemning certain other commanding officers of local units, including the subaltern's own superior. And the strange and most lamentable feature, both of the last-mentioned case as well as the case referred to as resulting from personal observation, is that higher command officers were named in both instances quoted as having expressed the same opinions to the speakers. As a general rule it is not the most efficient officers who are the keenest critics. There can be but one result proceed from this, and that result is bound to be detrimental to discipline, and discipline is the very mainspring of military efficiency.

"'T WAS EVER THUS!"

A British Columbian, writing from Kingston, where he has gone to complete his examinations and take a course in Field Artillery, writes to a relative in this city as follows: "There are over 130 in the class here, with accommodation for only 30, which latter number all other classes have been, and the instructors were all up in arms about having so many, and missed no opportunities to tell us how little we were wanted, and wishing that we would all go home. It was not very pleasant, I can tell you, although it is better now. If I had known it was going to be such a large class I might not have come."

He then goes on to give an idea of what their day's work consists of, and is apparently enjoying this, although he confesses to be somewhat tired at the end of the day.

"First parade at 6 a.m., which means rising at 5 a.m. We go for a five or six mile run or numnah ride and end at 7 or 7.30 a.m. Fall in again at 9 a.m. and have a squad drill, varied with lectures, etc., or grooming horses and cleaning stables until 12.30. Fall in again at 2 p.m., with squad drill, riding and stables until 5.30. The rest of the day we have to ourselves, and when not too tired, study."

SALUTING

The men of the Western Scots have gained an enviable reputation for saluting officers, always a sure sign of good training and discipline—in other words, good breeding—and it is to be hoped that a few slackers in the ranks will not mar this. While the men give the officers sore arms from returning salutes, there are still some men who fail to pay the proper respect to the King's Commission, and it is time that the men who are doing the right thing in this respect got after the others.

No man should think that there is the slightest degradation in saluting. A salute in the British service is returned, thereby making it a sign of mutual respect. The argument that "I am as good as you are" does not apply in this case, because the soldier should always remember that it is not the individual that he is saluting, but the person of His Majesty the King through the holder of His Majesty's commission.

We are sorry to say that there are some units in the camp that evidently think they are not called upon to salute the officers of other units. It is all too common an occurrence to

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see these men slouch past the officers with hands in pockets and pipes in their mouths, and not make the slightest effort at saluting. This not only stamps the men as undisciplined, but also sets a very bad example for the men who are honestly trying to do their duty, and has a most decided smack of bucolic life. In France today it is one of the most serious minor offences that a man can commit to pass an officer without saluting, and some of the men at present at the Willows are going to get an awful shock if they ever get to France and are hauled up on the carpet for neglect in this respect.

With the officers rests a certain responsibility. Every officer who is uniformed in such a way that he can be recognized as such and who lets a man pass him without saluting is very much in the wrong. Officers who do not receive a salute should make the man come back and salute him, and then find out his regimental number and name and report him at once in writing to his unit orderly room. This is the only way in which this important matter can be set right.

STRETCHER BEARER SECTION

We could a little tale disclose about four S.B. men who meandered into a well-known cafe down town and were there mistaken for war-worn heroes. The joke was rich, especially as the proprietor ordered the best of everything—gratis—for the gallant warriors. The bill was ultimately paid alright, but we do say that a broken leg has some advantages. What is your opinion, Bill?

There are smiles seen around the cubicle now. All the boys who tried the St. John's First Aid Exam. have been successful. Some class to our class!

We regret that our Section has again lost two more good men in Ptes. Maysmith and Danby. The former has transferred into the Mechanical Transports, the latter now acting as batman to Major Sargison. We shall all miss "Willie" especially. He was a real good sport, and was our Chinese guide, interpreter, and friend.

It is not true that Pte. Parkinson has been appointed M.O. for the Battalion.