

ON THE RECENT CHANGES IN THE FIELD EXERCISE.

BY CAPT. GEO. H. DARTNELL.

The War Office has lately issued a new edition of the authorized text book on Field Exercises and Evolutions of Infantry, by which many important changes and improvements have been made in drill.

To the great change in the mode of modern fighting consequent upon the improvements in arms of precision, is due many of the alterations, but others seem to be devised with a view to give greater ease and comfort to the soldier on parade and in the field. The time was when any improvement in the arming or equipment of the British soldier was stubbornly resisted by the authorities whenever it interfered in the slightest degree, with the existing formulas of drill. A better state of things is now prevalent. Public opinion is listened to with more attention, and sound sense and intelligence appear to be taking the place of former averseness to change and pedantic stupidity. It is to be hoped that this improvement will not be the only one. The rapidity of movement now so requisite can never be attained with the present tight dress of the British soldier. Our own Volunteers are furnished with a dress which is almost all a Light Infantry soldier can desire. It remains now but to provide him with accoutrements and necessities more fitted for his work than the present clumsy and weighty collection of straps, buckles and pouches.

The changes in drill commence from the beginning. The soldier is less confined in his movements, twenty-four inches being allotted to him in the ranks, instead of twenty-one, as before. The want of "elbow room" in loading with the Snider Enfield will, in part, account for this change. The side pace is lengthened from ten to twelve inches. In forming fours, the rear rank steps back eighteen inches instead of twelve, and the side or covering pace is twenty-four inches instead of twenty-one. These changes render it necessary in wheeling on a pivot, a named number of paces, for the covering Sergeant to step his paces from the seventh instead of the eighth file from the pivot flank. It follows, also, that, in order to ascertain the number of paces required for a given number of files, it will be necessary to multiply the number of files by eight and divide by ten. In squad drill the recruit will fall in with arms hanging "easily by," instead of "close to" the side, and with knuckles to the front. The touch is kept by the elbow, instead of the thick part of the arm below the elbow.

The manual has received considerable modifications, and troops now act, it may be said, as Light Infantry. The men fall in at the *order*, and all field movements and firings are performed with unfixed bayonets. Arms are carried at the *trail* when unloaded

and at the *slope* when loaded. When standing in line with bayonets fixed, troops will come to the *advance* as they move off. As a general rule they will be brought to the *slope*, before stepping off, except when required to move at the *shoulder*. When marching with sloped arms, on being halted, they will remain at the *slope*, except after forming or wheeling into line, in which case they will come to the *shoulder* as they halt, returning to the *slope*, after receiving the word, "*Eyes front*," or in halting after a charge in line, when they will come to the *shoulder*. In the double march, the disengaged hand will not be raised. The *secure* is struck out from the Manual and Review Exercise. No doubt the immunity from the consequences of change, which forms one of the great advantages of the Snider cartridges, is the cause of this change. Directions are inserted for coming to the *slope* from the *order*.

The Platoon Exercise, of course, is entirely re-written, as your readers have already had the benefit of seeing the new platoon in your columns, I will not further advert to it.

In closing in line to correct distances, the Captain will not move out of the line as heretofore. Such closings are to be made either to or from the centre of the battalions, by the Major from the rear of their wings. This is an improvement, and, besides, will give the Majors, while the troops are in line, something to do.

In company drill there are further simplification. Wheeling on the centre from line into column, and from the latter into line, is abolished. This was a pedantic and unnecessary movement, and puzzled many an officer. Countermarching is to be effected "by rank," except while on the march, when "by files" is permitted. Directions for increasing and diminishing front while retiring, have been inserted. These will not be new to graduates of the various military schools of the Provinces. The section (32) relating to the formation of close column of sections, and (33) rallying squares, have been revised and simplified. So also has section 34, in respect of proving a company. The mode of inspection of a company, on parade, especially in regard to the examination of arms, has been re-written. In firing a *feu de joie* the commanding officer will be in the rear.

Throughout, the word "front" is substituted for leading, in speaking of the Company at the head of a halted column or echelon, or of the front battalion of a mass of columns; and in speaking of lateral distance (as in line of contiguous columns), the word "interval" is invariably used instead of "distance."

In marching past, the Sergeant Major's position is defined. He is directed to march past in rear of the color party.

Drummers, fifers and buglers, when the battalion is in line, are removed from the

supernumerary rank, where they were of no use and were always in the way, and are directed in such case to form in rear of the band.

The "order of march at Review" has been revised, but as this is intended to settle questions of precedence not likely to arise among Volunteers, it is unnecessary further to notice the change of the new directions.

The "double march" is directed to be used "frequently" in the movements of companies, subdivisions, or sections, during the internal movements of a battalion.

In relieving or posting sentries, the old sentry and the man who relieves him, will be ordered to "shoulder arms" before the word "Front."

(To be continued.)

TROOPS FOR BELLEVILLE.

On Monday evening His Worship the Mayor, received a telegram from the Deputy Adjutant General, Col Jarvis, to meet him at the station on important business. The object of the interview was to ascertain whether the corporation were prepared to furnish accommodation for 400 troops and 20 officers for two years, upon the following conditions: That the Town pay one-half of the rent of the premises, a similar proportion of the expense of necessary alterations in any premises selected, to be ready in one week.

A special meeting of the council was called for ten o'clock the following morning, to consider the matter. There were present His Worship the Mayor, Messrs Brown, Sutherland, Kennedy, Tannahill, Robertson, Holden, Waters, and Foster. After discussing the matter, a committee composed of the Mayor, and Messrs. Tannahill and Robertson were appointed to visit the various premises, ascertain the rental and probable expense, and report at four o'clock at the Police office. At the hour appointed the council again convened, and the Committee reported as follows:

"That they had examined a number of building throughout the Town, and found that suitable accommodation could be provided. One block of buildings had been selected that would contain comfortably 300 men at the small rental of £90 per annum, and another that would hold the balance, at a nominal rental. That they recommend accepting the propositions of the government, and if the demand upon the Town was urgent, temporary accommodation would be provided until the premises selected should be put in proper condition."

The Council consider that the advantage to be derived by the Town through the large addition to our population, and the prospect of our becoming a garrison Town, would more than compensate us for the slight outlay required.

The clerk was requested to communicate the substance of the report to the Deputy Adjutant-General, and the Council adjourned.—*Daily Intelligencer*.