

## No. 7.

Major LUDLAM to the UNDER SECRETARY for DEFENCE.

SIR,—

Militia Office, Hutt, 10th October, 1874.

I have the honor to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 5th instant, informing me that you had submitted to the Hon. the Native Minister my letter of the 26th ultimo, and that he had instructed you to say, in reply, that such a course as I propose would be so unusual and subversive of discipline that he regrets he cannot comply with my request.

In reply, I desire to say that I should not have made what may appear to be an unusual request in asking for permission to publish the correspondence, but for the publicity given in the newspapers to that portion of Major Gordon's report relating to the Hutt portion of the Wellington District.

I trust the Hon. the Native Minister will do me the justice to lay the correspondence before Parliament at its next session, and obtain its sanction for it to be printed.

Lieut.-Colonel Moule,  
Acting Under Secretary for Defence, Wellington.

I have, &c.,  
A. LUDLAM,  
Major.

## No. 8.

Major GORDON to the UNDER SECRETARY for DEFENCE.

SIR,—

Auckland, 12th October, 1874.

Having been provided with a printed copy of my report on the Volunteer Force of the colony. I find that it is not in that complete state in which I wished it to be placed on record. A letter on the subject of irregularities in Thames District is omitted, and so also is Major Cooper's letter of explanation.

Other documents are added and bound up with the report, which until now I had not been permitted to see. I allude more particularly to the letter of Lieut.-Colonel Reader, of the 24th December, which, if it had been handed to me for report, would have been returned to you with a very earnest request that it should be withdrawn, or at all events re-written.

Colonel Reader has taken exception to the movements I required to be executed by his men, and I am glad to be able to afford sound reasons for my proceedings in this respect, which show how untenable are the arguments and opinions of Colonel Reader, and how much the publication of his letter is to be regretted.

In 1871, that officer compiled the Drill-book, entitled "Manual of Squad and Company Drill, for use of Volunteers," in which you will find the movements named by him (and which are the simplest in the work in question) fully explained for practice by a single company.

On the 21st August, 1871, the Government, by circular letter, adopted this code of drill, and enjoined a strict adherence thereto; and ever since that date, year by year, Colonel Reader has obtained capitulation from the Government for his men, by certifying that they had a competent knowledge (that is in effect what he did when he signed the annual capitulation returns) of the movements he now, in his letter of 24th December, informs you that they do not possess. One of the most important parts of my duty as Inspector was to ascertain that the various corps of the colony had a competent knowledge of squad and company drill; and it was not unreasonable to ask those under Colonel Reader's command to execute any—and I chose the most simple—of the movements defined in the book of instructions compiled by himself, and which had been ordered by the Government to practise in circular letter of 21st August, 1871, and for their supposed knowledge of which he had obtained capitulation for them.

Colonel Reader is quite in error in supposing that certain movements to which he alludes cannot be practised excepting in battalion, for his own compilation explains them as purely company movements; and he was ordered to practise them as such.

He is further in error in supposing that without the existence of a battalion he cannot carry out battalion drill. Such drill can be readily (and with one or two exceptions) completely executed with only two companies; and he has more than that number; indeed he has the elements for composing a strong and smart battalion for drill purposes.

Light-infantry drill he tells you he has not practised; but I consider that the ground on which his companies paraded was, though circumscribed, admirably adapted for, at all events, the rudiments of light drill.

Colonel Reader seems to have objected to his corps being inspected with their recruits in the ranks. Why then did he arm them and place them therein? It was clearly not my duty to go round such companies, and direct each man whom I might consider a recruit to fall out.

He tells you that in "doubling" with arms, his impression is that the elbows should not be bent, but he ought to be aware that in every instance of doubling the elbows are bent and hands raised excepting when arms are trailed.

He states that his drill sergeant was suspended "for writing a letter to the papers." I was in no way instrumental in placing this sergeant in arrest, but I have grounds for believing that he was suspended, to speak more accurately, for the sentiments he expressed in the letter which he wrote to the papers.

In his allusion to the Artillery Company, Colonel Reader adverts to my finding fault that certain company movements which were attempted by me were not familiar to the members of that corps, and that I further stated that the most important part of their duty was to learn ordinary company drill, gunnery drill being a secondary consideration. He has, no doubt, by this time been assured of the justice of my strictures and requirements, for I conclude he has had before him the form of efficiency certificate, which places in proper order the requisite attainments of Artillery Volunteers.