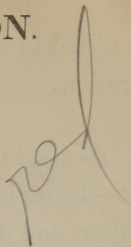


SANITARY COMMISSION.

No. 30.



The Committee to whom was referred the subjects of examinations of volunteers and other officers of the Army from civil life, and of reserves—

Respectfully report in part :

1. They deem it of the highest importance that a system of examinations should be established at once, under Sec. 10 of the Act of July 22, 1861, by which the qualifications of officers of all the new lines, or all newly-selected officers of future lines should be sifted. That the examinations should, when practicable, and as far as practicable, be general, so as to avoid making the fact of being examined a stigma. That they should be made as general as practicable under the present circumstances, avoiding, on the one hand, crippling the efficiency of the present army by depriving it of officers, and, on the other, a system inadequate, as to the qualifications required. That they should go as far back, in reference to time when the officers were appointed, as circumstances may permit. Be conducted as rapidly as possible. Refer to practical military matters, as well as to theory. Be made, as far as possible, by those who, having the requisite knowledge of military matters, are yet from circumstances prevented from active military command.

The Committee propose the following plan, subject to the modifications of the Commission, which they think, will, in a general way, meet the requirements of the important matter

committed to them, and provide for a prompt beginning of its execution.

1. To divide the regiments in actual service into two classes : First—Those in which from training already effected, and the positions and duties of the regiments, only those officers shall be closely examined who are reported as defective by the Brigadier-General commanding the brigade to which the regiment is attached, or by the Colonel of the regiment, the others to receive a *pro forma* examination merely.

That inquiry shall be at once addressed to the Brigadiers, and through them to the Colonels of regiments, in reference to the qualifications of officers.

2. Those regiments of the later levies, of which all the officers shall be examined.

The Committee recommend that when the exigencies of the service do not forbid, all officers from civil life should be examined, as the mere fact of examination would otherwise be a stigma upon the examined.

3. That a Board of five members be constituted for the purpose of holding examinations, to be selected from paroled Officers, from Professors of the Military Academy, if disposable, from resigned graduates of the U. S. Military Academy, to be commissioned for the purpose, and from other officers of the Army not available for active military service in the field. This will prevent any interference with active military operations, by the constitution of the Board. The system to begin with the Army of the Potomac, and, if successful, to be extended to other divisions.

4. The Board to draw up for the approval of the Command-

ing Generals of "Departments or Detached Armies" a statement of the qualifications necessary, and a plan of examination and recommendation. The plan of examination to include practical exercises with troops, according to grade.

5. The Board to visit places where masses of troops are congregated, to proceed promptly to examine and report upon the cases of all officers examined.

6. The plans of examination and selection of officers to conform to the laws in regard to volunteers.

7. The Board to present for approval also a plan for camps of instruction, to which officers of promise, not having the attainments necessary for immediate acceptance may resort.

8. The plans of the Board to suggest the way of dealing with cases in which an officer selected for a certain grade, and not qualified, is willing to accept a lower one for which he is fully qualified.

9. The Board to make such suggestions from time to time for the approval of the Commanding General, as may meet cases of doubt or difficulty in practice, or as may be judged improvements of the plan of organization and of examination.

The Committee would further present a plan for a school for training rapidly Non-Commissioned Officers, adapted to the prospective wants of the Army, volunteers, and regulars, devised by one of their West Point associates, Professor Mahan.

1. To allow each company to select or nominate the four men under the age of 25 that they may deem the most worthy of promotion to Non-Commissioned Officers.

2. These four men to be examined by a Board of competent officers selected from the Regiment, to ascertain their soldierly and mental attainments, and their moral character. The requisite mental attainments to be to read and spell correctly, write a fair business hand, and to have sufficient knowledge of arithmetic to make out all the papers, &c., of a company. Each nominee also to declare on honor that he has taken no steps, directly or indirectly, to secure his own nomination.

3. The two most competent of the four to be regarded as eligible to promotion; the others returning to the company for another trial, if again selected.

4. All of those selected to be embodied into one corps, and placed under the charge of competent officers, for such a course of instruction as most suitable to make them useful Non Commissioned or Commissioned Company Officers.

5. That as fast as any of the Corps show themselves qualified in the prescribed course of instruction, they be examined by a competent Board, receive a certificate of qualification, and be returned to their companies as candidates for vacancies.

The Committee recommends the adoption of the following resolution by the Commission:

Resolved, That the Report of the Committee on Examination of Officers is adopted as the Report of this Commission, and that a copy be presented to Major-General G. B. McClellan, U. S. A., commanding the Army of the Potomac, asking that this plan be put into execution, if approved by him, under the law, as early as practicable.

On behalf of the Committee.

A. D. BACHE,
Chairman.

Chatham