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NEW REGULATIONS FOR PROMOTION BY SELECTION IN THE ITALIAN INFANTRY AND CAVALRY.

Translated from the "Giornale Militare Ufficiale," by Captain
W. TENISON, the Manchester Regiment.

GENERAL PELLOUX, the Italian War Minister, promulgated in the "Giornale Militare Ufficiale" of the 21st February last, the following Decree, bearing date of the 19th February:—

Your Majesty,

Former War Ministers have drawn up and elaborated an Act with regard to promotion in Your Majesty's Army, and repeatedly, and with successive alterations, have presented it for discussion to the Senate and Chamber of Deputies; but, through Parliamentary vicissitudes, have not as yet been able to get it approved.

The necessity and urgency of legislative regulations touching promotion, which should agree with all the existing Regulations in the matter, some of which are no longer suitable to the actual state of affairs, are self-evident. It is my intention, rather I consider it my strict duty, to revise this Act, modifying it where it appears necessary, and to present it again to Parliament as soon as possible, with the hope that it may gain its approbation.

As, however, by experience of the past (notwithstanding the importance of the matter), and on account of the many other duties which are incumbent on Parliament, I would not dare flatter myself that this could be accomplished as quickly as could be desired; yet, in order not to delay any longer the advantages which will accrue to the Army from the proposed regulations which I intend to confirm in the Act in question, and which I consider urgent, whilst wholly in accord with the Act of 1853 in force for promotion in the Army, I pray Your Majesty to give your consent to its immediate operation.

The measure I advise would be to establish some Regulations with regard to promotion by selection of Captains of infantry and cavalry; on the same basis as those which regulate the promotion of those Officers who have successfully accomplished the course of studies at the Military Academy (Scuola di Guerra).

It seems to me so manifest that the instruction and higher education of Army Officers will derive the greatest profit from this measure, encouraging as it will the love of study in the younger Officers, that I do not hesitate to pray Your Majesty to affix Your august signature to the annexed Decree.

UMBERTO I, &c., &c., King of Italy,

Touching the promotion Act in our Army bearing date 13th November, 1853, and the modifications introduced by the successive

Acts of 20th January, 1854; 4th April, 1855; 30th March, 1856; 20th March and 8th October, 1873;

Touching the Royal Decree of 5th June, 1855, approving the Regulations for the execution of the Army Promotion Act, and the modifications introduced by the Royal Decree of 30th March, 1856;

Touching the Royal Decree of 25th January, 1888, relative to the instructions for the Military Academy;

On the proposal of the Minister of War;

We have decreed and do decree:

Art. 1.

Hereby are instituted examinations for promotion by selection to the rank of Major for Captains of infantry and cavalry.

Art. 2.

Captains of these arms who shall be brought forward for promotion by selection, and who shall pass successfully the examinations mentioned in the preceding article, will acquire the right to be promoted to the rank of Major, in the limits established by Article 6 of the Royal Decree of 25th January, 1888, which modifies the Military Academy Regulations.

Art 3.

The conditions of admission to the examinations, the subjects on which they will be based, and all other particulars relating to the same, will be from time to time established by Our Secretary of State for War.

The War Minister is charged to carry out the present Decree, which will be registered at the "Corte dei Conti."

UMBERTO.

PELLOUX.

The War Minister reserves to himself the right to fix the minimum limit of seniority for admission to these examinations. For the current year it has been fixed for Captains of infantry at the 22nd October, 1884, and for Captains of cavalry at the 31st December, 1884. Only those Officers who have proved themselves of superior ability will be admitted to the examinations, in order to fully justify the system of promotion by selection.

The examination, which will be very severe, will be conducted by a Board consisting of a General as President, and four Generals or Colonels as members, with two Colonels as assistant members.

The tests will be five in number, viz. :—

1. A written essay, followed by an oral discussion before the Board, of a question which, without taxing the candidate's memory, will prove the thoroughness of his general education and the extent of his military knowledge.

2. A written solution, followed by an oral discussion before the

Board, of a theme in applied tactics, with the aid of a map only. Generally, the handling of an infantry division in some preconceived plan of action will be given as a test.

3. The practical solution of some tactical scheme in which all three arms are employed. The movements of each of the attacking and defending forces will be directed by one of the candidates. An infantry candidate will be required to take command of a force consisting of at least two battalions, and proportionate detachments of cavalry and artillery. A cavalry candidate will command a force consisting chiefly of that arm.

4. Practical participation in manœuvres, in which the candidate will take subordinate command of some unit equal to at least a regiment.

5. *Horsemanship*.—The Board will satisfy themselves of the candidate's proficiency during the practical work in the field. Should any doubt exist as to his proficiency, he will have to undergo a special examination.

Each member of the Board, except the assistant members, who do not vote, will record his vote secretly. At the end of the examination, the Board will reassemble under the President, who will collect the votes of the members for each candidate.

Those candidates who have obtained four votes will be recorded as successful, and will obtain the right of promotion when they are amongst the first six in the seniority list of Captains, provided their future reports continue favourable.

Those candidates who have obtained three votes will be allowed to present themselves again for examination. Their failure will in no way affect their future prospect of promotion by seniority. The fact of their having been recommended as candidates for this examination will be sufficient guarantee of their ability, and will prove an additional claim for such promotion.

For the current year, the senior Captain of those who have passed successfully the examination will be selected for promotion to the rank of Major as soon as the Officer immediately junior to him in the Army List shall have entered amongst the first six in the seniority list.

At present it is not intended to make any alterations in the laws regarding the promotion of Captains of artillery and engineers, as amongst these Officers there has always existed a certain repugnance to admit that any of them have sufficient superiority over their comrades to allow of any particular individual being selected for promotion. This question will, however, be also examined with impartiality, and dealt with in the forthcoming Promotion Act.

We may remark, in reference to the foregoing, that promotion by selection in the Italian Army is no new departure on the part of General Pelloux, for ever since 1853 selection, tempered by seniority, has been the rule. Heretofore, however, there has been a good deal of dissatisfaction amongst Officers as to its working, and successive War Ministers, as General Pelloux mentions in his petition to the

King, have tried to allay it by the introduction of a new Act, which has as yet proved abortive. There is no doubt that the Officers themselves, though subjected to a severe test, will derive great satisfaction at the final settlement of the question; and the whole of the Italian Army, in which the higher education of Officers has perhaps not advanced quite so rapidly as in our own or that of Germany, will receive a fresh impetus from the War Minister's measure.