

Other Stores.—Considerable quantities of “controlled” stores—*i.e.*, stores and equipment peculiar to Army—have become surplus to requirements. Such surpluses are regularly reported to the War Office, and very substantial quantities have been ordered for shipment from New Zealand to other theatres of war or to be held in New Zealand as a War Office reserve.

Petrol reserves which were held in wayside bowser stations have already been disposed of, and 44-gallon-drum reserves are being disposed of by drawing on them for current consumption and by sale to oil companies through the Oil Fuel Controller.

Surplus foodstuffs are being disposed of from time to time through the Food Controller, and all other general surplus stores will be disposed of through the War Assets Realization Board.

Small-arms Ammunition.—Reference was made in the last annual report to the high quality of small-arms ammunition being produced by the Colonial Ammunition Co. This standard has been maintained.

During the year under review our war reserve had reached the required figure, and with the change in the strategical situation it was agreed to release substantial quantities to the Eastern Group Supply Council. Up to 31st March, 1944, some 64,000,000 rounds had been released and shipped. It was also decided that, commencing 1st April, 1944, production in New Zealand was to be reduced to a quantity sufficient to take charge of local requirements, plus a monthly allotment for overseas.

Gun Ammunition.—Consequent upon the completion of the magazine-construction programme all gun ammunition is now stored in magazines or is in process of transfer thereto. Large quantities have been returned to New Zealand from the Pacific during the year, and this is all being carefully inspected and reconditioned. Except for a few special types, all orders overseas have been cancelled and there are indications that our surplus holdings of many types will be taken over by the War Office.

Uniforms and Clothing.—Production has been well maintained during the year, and although our local requirements have been very much reduced there have been very heavy demands from the 2nd New Zealand Expeditionary Force following on the transfer of the 2nd Division to Italy.

Storage.—The storage of stores and equipment is still a difficult problem, although considerable improvement has been effected recently. It is expected that substantial storage space will shortly be vacated by the United States Forces and become available to Army.

Ordnance Workshops.—The enormous increase in our holdings of artillery, searchlight, wireless, and Radar equipments, and the ancillary stores and equipment that go with them, has thrown an enormous strain on Ordnance Workshops. The volume of work has long since outgrown the workshop accommodation and equipment, and, although many improvements have been made in these respects, further additions are required. Lack of trained staff, too, has been a difficulty, and for these reasons there is a large accumulation of work to be carried out during the next twelve months, particularly with respect to modifications of instruments and equipment and the preparation of equipments for shipment overseas to the order of the War Office.

RATIONS AND SUPPLIES

The Army Service Corps services have continued to function smoothly and efficiently during the year. A total of approximately 9,000,000 rations were issued to home-defence troops, as against a total of 21,000,000 for the previous twelve months. The cost of the daily ration has remained very constant, the average cost over the whole period of the war being 1s. 10-81d. A total of 281,584 prisoners-of-war rations was issued for the period.

With the removal of the threat against New Zealand and consequent upon the re-organization of the Forces, reserves of food which were distributed throughout New Zealand have now been withdrawn into Army Service Corps depots and have been, and are being gradually, disposed of by sale to New Zealand merchants and by transfer to United States Forces.

CANTEENS

The operation of the Canteen Board has continued to give general satisfaction. During the year canteen profits to the extent of £43,800 were distributed to Army units.

MOVEMENTS OF TROOPS: SHIPPING AND RAILWAYS

Troop movements within New Zealand have been on a large scale, but all have been carried out smoothly, thanks largely to the splendid co-operation of the New Zealand Railways Department and the various shipping companies.

Movements of troops overseas have been considerable—to and from the Pacific and Middle East, including two large furlough drafts from Middle East.

HOSPITAL SHIPS

The New Zealand Hospital Ship No. 1, “Maunganui,” made two return voyages to Middle East during the year, carrying a total of 712 sick and wounded; the “Oranje” did two trips, carrying 1,224, and the “Wanganella” one trip, with 212.