

to be able to report next year that these corps have more expert signallers than at present, as signallers are badly wanted in the Force.

More work in the field in daylight is also badly wanted. Field Engineer officers should be experts in the choice of ground, and have the knowledge of how to use it to the best advantage—for defence of positions for example.

These corps can do a great deal of their training in drill-halls, &c., but the work learned there is only preparatory, and they must get into the field to enable them to understand how to use the knowledge gained indoors.

Most of the men in this country know how to dig, I presume. The knowledge that is required is where to dig, and that can only be acquired out of doors.

The Wellington Submarine Mining Engineers paraded for inspection in the drill-hall

MOUNTED RIFLES.

The Mounted Rifle corps have, I consider, greater opportunities of becoming efficient and useful in their own work than other branches of the field force, for the following reasons: (a) they are almost entirely composed of officers and men who live and work in the country; (b) they train in camp for a week at least in the daytime.

What is required therefore is that, in addition to learning their drill, &c. (which is only the beginning and not the end of a soldier's work), and the theory of tactics, they should be taught to bring the knowledge of country which their daily lives and occupations give them, to bear on the study of practical tactics and the art of making the best use, from a military point of view, of whatever ground they may have to fight over.

With regard to the drill, more attention should be paid to dismounted drill, and to making all officers and N.C.O.s more proficient in instructing and handling their men. Corps would soon find the benefit of this, even from the point of view of the appearance of their men, and consequently of the whole corps, as it is principally dismounted drill that makes men smart and soldier-like.

The men are generally of very good physique, and in most of the corps neat and uniformly dressed and equipped, especially so in the Canterbury corps that I inspected in camp at Easter.

The horses throughout are of a useful stamp generally and serviceable, though in some corps rough in appearance. The horses of the Canterbury corps referred to above are, taken as a whole, the best I have seen. In a few of the corps sufficient attention is not paid by officers and men to uniformity of clothing and equipment. This does not mean extra expense, but just care in management, and it helps to mark the difference between a smart corps and a mob. As an example, although it has not yet been possible for all corps to obtain uniform saddlery, there is no reason why two or three men of a corps should parade with towels and a few with potato-sacks for saddle-cloths. No saddle-cloth at all is cheaper, and a saddle that is not fit to put on a horse without a cloth is not fit to use.

In some corps, also, more attention should be devoted to horsemastership, or the care of horses, without which they must break down if used for any length of time on service.

INFANTRY.

These corps vary more in efficiency and appearance than the corps of any other branch of the service, from smartly drilled, well turned-out corps, in which all the officers and most, at any rate, of the N.C.O.s are able to drill, instruct, and handle their men, to one or two corps, slack and slovenly in turn-out and drill, in which all ranks are practically ignorant of their work. The rule is, almost without exception, that where the officers are good and keen the N.C.O.s and men are also.

This branch, taken as a whole, gets, I am sure, less opportunities of learning its work in the field than any other, and generally needs it more, being to a very great extent composed of officers and men who live always in towns.

The physique also varies more than in any other arm, there being a great number of very young and weedy men in several of the town corps. It is a striking fact that the farther south one goes the better, generally speaking, is the physique of the town Infantry corps, due, I conclude, to the harder and colder climate in the South.

CYCLISTS.

I have seen only one Cycle corps (Canterbury) in the field, where they did very good work as scouts and orderlies at Easter. The other corps were inspected with the Infantry battalions to which they are attached. I consider these corps could be made of great value if trained as scouts, signallers, &c.

FIELD HOSPITAL AND BEARER CORPS.

The Bearer corps I have inspected have been smart, keen, and well up in their duties apparently. The organization of this branch is to be gone into on the arrival of the Adjutant-General.

DEFENCE CADETS.

I have inspected eight Cadet corps, all, with two exceptions, being school corps. All the corps were smartly drilled, and neatly and uniformly turned out. Generally their drill compares very favourably indeed with the adult corps, and one school Cadet corps is certainly, as far as drill goes, ahead of any corps I have yet inspected. It must not be forgotten, however, that Cadet corps cannot go much beyond drill, and must be recognised as a means and not as an end.