

One tent per each eight men was provided for the Infantry camps, and one tent per each six men was provided for the Mounted Rifles camps, the increased accommodation in the latter being to provide room for the saddlery.

All camp equipment was issued to regiments direct from the depot as required, thus obviating any loss by direct consignment in small lots, or doubt as to quantities taken into use. On the termination of the camps, all camp equipment in use by the units assembled was returned to the depot, and the necessary arrangements as to deficiencies, &c., made without any delay. For this purpose Regimental Quartermaster-sergeants were instructed to remain on departure of their regiments under the orders of the Brigade Supply Officer till accounts for rations and equipment had been checked and adjusted.

(f.) *Transport.*

For the transport work of the camps in the four districts, and the conveyance of stores, equipment, and baggage from the railway sidings to the camp-sites, the Artillery horses and transport wagons in each district, with the necessary complement of Artillery drivers, were utilized as soon as the Field Artillery Brigade camps concluded, and the exigences of the service permitted.

Civilian transport was therefore only necessary for the transport of such equipment and stores as was arriving at the railway sidings before the artillery transport was available, or where, when the bulk of the camp stores was coming to hand, the Artillery transport was not sufficient for prompt removal of the supplies to the camp supply-depots. This enabled the cost of hiring civilian transport to be kept as low as possible.

The hire of civilian transport was, of course, necessary for the carriage of the baggage and equipment of squadrons, companies, &c., from and to their headquarters on proceeding to entrain for the camps, or on their detraining on return.

Every endeavour will be made next year to have the camps close to the railway-line in order to save transport.

45. RAILWAY AND STEAMER TRANSPORT FOR ANNUAL CAMPS.

The excellent arrangements made by the Railway Department for the conveyance of troops and horses, baggage, camp equipment, and supplies to camps cannot be permitted to pass without mention, and the thanks of this Department are due to all Railway officers concerned, particularly District Traffic and Goods staffs, and for the loan of railway sleepers and tarpaulins for the protection of stores at the camp-sites.

The Railway Department also constructed a ramp at the Sutton (Otago District) camp siding, to facilitate the unloading of horses; and at the Oringi (Wellington District) camp siding arranged for the lengthening of the loading-bank by 40 ft., and the increase of the existing siding accommodation by the provision of a back-shunt at each end of the original loop siding, to facilitate the detraining of troops, horses, and supplies.

These increased facilities greatly assisted the work of the camps, by thus enabling the disembarkation and embarkation of troops, horses, and supplies to be carried out more expeditiously, and the work of the camps to proceed without undue delay. The accommodation at Cambridge (Auckland District) and Hornby (Canterbury District) proved ample for the Department's requirements in this respect.

Special thanks are due to the Public Works Department for enabling the West Coast troops to be conveyed over the section under construction from Bealey Flat to the Cass, which obviated their camping for the night at the former place, and for the steps taken to effect repairs and enable their return after the damage resulting from the inclement weather at the termination of the camp.

The Railway Department must also be mentioned in this connection for the provision of carriages instead of open trucks for the use of the Public Works Department, which precluded the troops suffering from exposure in the latter after their march through the gorge from the Otira railhead.

In connection with the Railway transport for the late brigade camps, the good system adopted by numbering plainly the carriages, &c., used for the conveyance of the troops' horses, equipment, &c., to and from the camp for the respective units, squadrons, companies, &c., proceeding, greatly facilitated the work of entraining.

In many instances it was necessary for small bodies of troops from the smaller centres coming to the camps, where railway facilities did not exist, to proceed by the local coach-lines to the nearest railway-station, and in this respect the local coaching-facilities proved ample for the requirements.

It was necessary to convey the Nelson and Picton troops required to proceed to the Yaldhurst camp by steamer to Lyttelton, and by arrangement with the Union Steamship Company the s.s. "Navua" was detailed to carry the troops, equipment, and guns required from Nelson and Picton on the 17th and 20th March respectively, the whole returning per s.s. "Monowai," leaving Lyttelton on the evening of the 28th March.

Owing to the existing steamer time-tables, and the necessity of precluding Sunday travelling, it would have been necessary to charter a special steamer to have returned the bulk of the 11th (North Auckland) Regiment (Whangarei) to its Headquarters and other centres along the east coast on the termination of the Infantry brigade camp at Cambridge. To obviate this, it was decided to curtail this regiment's period of training by one day, to enable it to be despatched by the ordinary steamer for Whangarei and northwards, the west coast men being despatched overland from Whangarei to Hokianga and elsewhere.