

SECTION I.—THE DOMINION SECTION OF THE IMPERIAL GENERAL STAFF.

1. DRILLS AND PARADES.

I am compelled to reiterate my opinion that there is still too much lack of variety in the instruction given during drill hours, and too much use of drill-halls. While it is important that all ranks of the Territorial Force and Senior Cadets should be thoroughly grounded in drill, it must be remembered that the hours allotted for this purpose should not be allowed to become irksome or monotonous. Work must be varied to retain the interest of those instructed, and in the long days of summer and in fine weather drills must be held out of doors and in the country. Drill-halls should only be made use of in bad weather and when the days are short.

There has been a noticeable improvement in attendance during the past year, and the improvement in discipline, steadiness, and drill as shown at the inspections of the Inspector-General of the Oversea Forces is very marked.

In accordance with the recommendation of the Inspector-General, drills in country districts will be gradually replaced by the system of concentrated training indicated in paragraph 88 of his report, provided that money for the purpose is forthcoming. This system will also apply to the whole- and half-day parades in the country. In the neighbourhood of the towns, where the system of regular drills and parades will still hold good, valuable work has been done during the year, and will continue to be done, by the assembly of units, for a day's field operations. In some cases the co-operation of all arms has been practised, and I hope still more will be done in this direction.

2. TERRITORIAL TRAINING-CAMPS.

The camps for the year were held by districts, and as far as possible all troops of all arms in each district were assembled in one divisional camp.

The Otago camp was at Matarae, in Central Otago; the Canterbury camp at Kowai, near Springfield; that of Wellington at Takapau; and the Auckland camp at Hautapu, near Cambridge. In addition, a camp for the Marlborough and Nelson troops was held at Tapawera, near Nelson, in order to save the cost of the transport, to the main camp of their district at Kowai, of the regiment of Mounted Rifles, the battery of Artillery, and the battalion of Infantry which are drawn from these provinces. It is much to be regretted, from a training point of view, that these units thus lost the opportunity of working with the other units of the brigades in which they would have to take their place in the event of active operations.

On completion of the main annual camps, second camps were held at the same centres for those "casuals" who were unable to attend the first camp. All units completed their annual training in camp before the end of May.

As last year, Mounted Rifle regiments and country companies of Infantry went into annual camp four days before the remainder of the units, and completed eleven days' training instead of seven. These four extra days' training were in lieu of a proportionate number of drills during the year.

In the case of country companies of Infantry it has been deemed necessary hitherto to insist arbitrarily that a company as a whole must accept either the one scale or the other. This system works unsatisfactorily in the case of companies which are composed partly of men living in townships and partly of men living in the country. Those living in the towns prefer the whole number of statutory drills and only seven days' training in camp. This is also more convenient for employers in towns. I propose, therefore, to endeavour to arrange as far as possible that only men following country vocations should do the extended training in camp in lieu of drills.

The organization and administration of the big camps was carried out most successfully by District Commanders and their staffs, and a great measure of the success achieved is due to the excellent work done by the Army Service Corps staff and our new Territorial Army Service Corps companies which were used at camp for the first time.

Owing to the exceptionally early winter, the weather experienced in the camps, except that in Otago, left much to be desired, and interfered considerably with the training. Although exposed to a certain amount of hardship and discomfort, all ranks, as a rule, submitted cheerfully to the trying conditions imposed on them by the elements and bore themselves in a soldier-like manner. To this there was one exception, when a small body of men marred the record of good conduct of the great majority of the Territorial Force. Into this regrettable incident a full inquiry has taken place, of which the conclusions have been laid before you.

These divisional camps have afforded District Commanders and their staffs much useful instruction and exercise in the handling of considerable bodies of all arms, which would, of course, be of inestimable value to the Forces should they be called upon to take the field.

The Inspector-General of the Oversea Forces witnessed field operations conducted by the higher Commanders at each of the camps, and his remarks and criticisms on them are embodied in his report.

When possible a certain amount of musketry and machine-gun practice was carried out during these camps.

The sanitary arrangements of the camps were satisfactory.

There was an increase of field (Salamander) cooking-ovens this year. As these are most useful, especially in bad weather when it is difficult to work with the ordinary field-oven, I hope that sufficient may be obtained to complete the issue to all units. A further reference to cooking will be found under Section III, paragraph 67. Increased supervision on the part of squadron and company officers prevented to a great extent the waste of rations which took place last year, but more still can be done in this respect.