

Great difficulty has been experienced in carrying out the training in the towns and country owing to the limited range of accommodation, and in the country owing to the difficulty of assembling the men. Nevertheless, successful rifle meetings have been held by the Dominion Rifle Association at district headquarters and in areas. I personally favour the latter, as they are easy of access to the majority of the men, and afford more encouragement for the moderate shot than larger meetings.

122. In view of the fact that each district has an experienced, competent, and up-to-date musketry instructor (all four of them have lately been instructors at the School of Musketry at Hythe), I do not think it is necessary to establish a school of musketry in this country, and would recommend that if it is desired to send anybody to a school of musketry, advantage should be taken of the offer of the Australian authorities to take them at the Australian School of Musketry at Randwick, in the same way that New Zealand Cadets are taken at the Royal Military College at Duntroon. I am glad to see that, generally speaking, the musketry instruction is conducted on up-to-date and service lines, and trust that by degrees these methods will become absolutely universal in all branches of the Army, including Rifle Clubs. The latter are essentially a serviceable body of men, and by degrees, if their methods of shooting can be brought to a condition of greater harmony with those of the serving Territorials, they will furnish schools where Reservists and men of the General Training Section can obtain invaluable instruction in musketry.

Aviation.

123. Sooner or later the provision of a service of aviation in New Zealand will become necessary. Military aviation is still to-day in the experimental stage, and experiments on the scale that would be financially possible in this country would be unlikely to lead far. Furthermore, the air and landing conditions in the Dominion are not such as to tempt hostile aviators. For these reasons I would recommend a waiting policy for the present. But it may be well to send one or two officers to learn flying elsewhere, in order that expert knowledge may be at the disposal of the Defence Department to assist in its study of progress made in other countries.

Cadets.

124. During my tour I saw every Senior Cadet unit in the Dominion, and, altogether, I actually inspected over 17,800 Cadets. The boys' physique is, on the average, of a very high order, and I never wish to see a happier, more cheery looking crowd.

Many of the boys came in from great distances, and I admire the organization that could bring them together and house and feed them comfortably, sometimes, in the case of weather-bound vessels, for periods extending to a week. Some Cadets were lodged and catered for in drill-halls; others were put up by hospitable and patriotic inhabitants; and, in this admirable work especially, the ladies of the Victoria League rendered invaluable aid to the military authorities.

125. Town boys or public-school boys have great advantages in the matter of training over their companions in the country districts, who have often to cycle weary distances, after milking many cows, in order to attend their drills. Consequently, on parade the town boys are as a rule the steadier, and march past more brilliantly. Still, wherever there was a zealous instructor with a turn for handling boys, there the country companies also gave a capital showing.

As I have urged elsewhere, the training of the scattered units would be immensely improved, and be rendered at the same time less of a strain on employers, Cadets, and instructors, if some system could be devised by which the boys could be collected for a few days' company concentration every year instead of going long distances to attend drills at which very small numbers are present.

126. With adults a vast deal depends on the instructor, but a good curriculum will always enable keen men to work out their own salvation. With Cadets the curriculum counts for literally nothing compared to the instructor. A man with a vocation for that sort of job, especially if he has war-medals, an ultra-fierce aspect, and a loud and military word of command, will quickly produce discipline and steady drill. Every effort should be made to secure the best possible instructors, and to give themselves a good personal equipment of knowledge of drill, of warlike stories, and of the principles of discipline. For it should ever be borne in mind that a fund of knowledge and a suitable, impressive method of teaching will create a good discipline where mere punishment will every time signally fail. In many areas this discipline has already made good progress; but in some companies again boys have still almost everything to learn. On one occasion, after my inspection was over, I happened to pass a column of Cadets on their way home in the dusk. The ranks were broken and in disorder, and there was a good deal of horse-play, shouting, and noise: discipline had gone to the dogs. In front of the column marched three or four officers, apparently unconcerned with what was going on behind them. Now, this was bad work. All the good of the parade and inspection had been thrown away, and a positive unsoldierlike spirit was in process of being actively engendered. On the other hand, many of the companies I saw stood perfectly steady on parade, and marched with a smartness and precision that would be quite impossible in the absence of real discipline.

127. On one or two occasions I saw Cadets at field-work. They attacked with great dash and enthusiasm, but without science or forethought. The subordinate leading of the squads and sections leaves most room for improvement.

The Cadets might, I think, be provided with a greatcoat or cape as soon as funds admit. Some of the units of the Officers' Training Corps in Great Britain wear inexpensive capes that might be copied here.

A notable feature of all the Cadet parades was the presentation of a handsome silver cup to every company, to be held by the best shooting Cadet for the year. These cups, the gift of the ladies of New Zealand, are a wholesome sign of the interest felt by the people in the future destinies of the Dominion.