

If the above training had been completed, there is no question that all ranks and units of the Territorial Force would not only have benefited in efficiency, but, by the definite progress and results therefrom, would have received a much-needed stimulus and encouragement. The epidemic of infantile paralysis unfortunately intervened at the most active period of the training-year and prevented many units holding their annual periods of continuous and collective training.

Notwithstanding the interruption of training by the epidemic, it is abundantly evident from the results obtained by those units which completed their training, and which I personally inspected, that very encouraging progress was made, and that all ranks were stimulated by the collective training and more interesting field-work was thus made possible. A very marked feature of these camps was the keenness of all ranks and the good discipline and spirit which prevailed.

Many changes have recently taken place among the Commanders of brigades, Mounted Rifle regiments, Infantry battalions, and technical units of the Territorial Force. The normal tenure of command of brigades and units is four years. These periodical changes are necessary and beneficial in many ways, particularly by ensuring the regular promotion of the officers qualified for command or other appointment.

With the transfer to the Reserve of the Commanders and other officers who have recently relinquished their appointments the Military Forces of the Dominion have lost the active services of several experienced officers with fine war records. I wish to place on record my appreciation of their work, and also to express my regret that, consequent on the severe retrenchment and curtailment of training rendered necessary through financial stringency during their tenure of command with the Territorial Force, they have had so few opportunities to exercise and command their units, as such, in collective field training and tactical work.

In their successors we are fortunate in having many officers of proved experience in war, and I feel confident that they will worthily carry on the command and duties now devolving on them. It will be reassuring to them and to all concerned to know that if the programme of training now approved is carried out without interruption there will be more opportunities for concentrated and continuous field training, which must result in increased efficiency and added interest for all units.

While dealing with this part of my report I should like to emphasize the importance of the duties and great responsibility which devolve upon the Commanders and all officers of our Territorial units. The efficiency, progress, cohesion, and spirit of a unit almost invariably reflect the professional knowledge, personal zeal, energy, and personality of its Commander and his officers. This great factor in the general well-being and fighting-power of a unit is always demonstrated, proved, and recognized on active service and under the stress of war, but sometimes is not so obvious in the routine of training in peace.

With a scheme of Territorial training such as that at present in operation—one which, for financial reasons, is strictly limited in its application—it is inevitable that there are many inherent difficulties. A very marked characteristic of those eligible for Territorial training is the constant change of residence from one part of the Dominion to another. This transition causes a large number of transfers, not only between the various units of the Territorial Force, but more particularly between the training-areas and outlying or non-effective localities. The administrative and clerical duties in this connection are consequently continuous and heavy, and, from a training point of view, the transfers from and to outlying or non-effective localities result in a constant influx of untrained or only partially trained personnel into all units, with a corresponding loss of trained or more experienced men. These conditions, at present unavoidable, react very seriously against collective efficiency and the more advanced training of many units, and it is only by careful organization and grading by proficiency that progress in tactical training can be carried out.

To solve these and other difficulties, and to meet the natural increase in numbers consequent upon the growth of the population, it will be necessary to concentrate more on collective training by increasing the time of continuous training in camp, and by reducing to a minimum the number of periodical drills and parades. This will permit of the present very limited training-areas (*i.e.*, country within a radius of three miles of an established drill centre) to be extended, thus ensuring a greater universality in the application of the defence scheme; it will also provide a more economical and progressive system of training; and, as it will interfere less with ordinary avocations and civil life, I feel confident that it will prove more acceptable to the troops themselves, and also their employers.

N.Z. Mounted Rifles.

This arm of the service is now stronger in men than it has been for several years, but the scarcity of horses suitable for military work is a disquieting feature which retards progressive training. With the reintroduction of continuous training this difficulty may be lessened by extending the training-radius so as to embrace rural areas where horses are more plentiful.

Camp training suits the Mounted Riflemen, and the camps held during the year were extremely well attended, but, as previously mentioned, the training was somewhat hampered through many men not being mounted. However, training programmes were so arranged that all men received training in both dismounted and mounted duties, and the progress made under such conditions was quite satisfactory.

A most useful drill manual to be used in conjunction with "Cavalry Training" has been compiled by the General Staff for the use of Mounted Rifle regiments, and should do much to simplify and standardize their training.