

Such work as they have had to do at manœuvres has been satisfactorily carried out, and the corps should always be fit to do their duty in war, as all the officers are medical men and are therefore doing practically the same work as soldiers to which they have devoted years of training and which they practise every day of their lives. They deserve the more credit for this, as it is no change for them from their ordinary occupation.

Defence Cadets.

I have inspected forty-seven cadet corps, with a total enrolled strength of 2,526 at date of inspection, and an establishment of 2,920. The number paraded for inspection was 1,905. Two of these corps were Garrison Artillery Cadets and the remainder Infantry. Many of them have turned out with the adult corps for field-work, and others have been inspected separately. In all cases they have mustered well and worked well, and are, I consider, in a satisfactory condition generally.

I am particularly glad to be able to say that the two corps which I reported adversely upon last year in every way, pulled themselves up to the standard of the rest, and there is no fault now to be found with them specially.

They are all throughout very much in earnest and doing good work. I should like to suggest, however, that, as their training should form part of their education, I am sure it would be well if in all cases it could be done in *school-time* and not *play-time*. The result would be, I am sure, that they would be keener still.

In view of the contemplated formation of Officers' Training Corps at universities and senior schools, on my recent visit to Wanganui Collegiate School I obtained permission from the headmaster to have an hour's talk to the cadets on field-work the evening before my inspection. That they were keen is shown by their asking for more, and Mr. Empson very kindly afforded me an opportunity for another hour next morning. In the afternoon they went out on to suitable country and practised what we had been discussing, and the result was so gratifying and all the boys so enthusiastic that I feel certain the success of these training corps, provided they are managed in the best possible way, is assured.

Rifle Clubs.

The number of enrolled members of these clubs at the end of the Volunteer year was 3,697. At Easter efforts were made to induce the Rifle Clubs to go into camp for two days' training at convenient centres to enable them to at least learn some of the rudiments of soldiering, and so fit themselves to take their share in the defence of the country. They were offered a small personal payment, besides rations. Out of the whole Dominion a total of 77 turned out (all in Wellington), and 3,620 did not. I need say little more about that experiment. Many things have small beginnings, and in the distant future it is possible they may turn out in sufficient numbers and for sufficient time to make it worth the expenditure, but the prospects at present are not hopeful, to say the least.

ARMS AND EQUIPMENT.

There are now 4,000 of the new short rifles in the Dominion, of which 2,000 are on issue to the Mounted Rifles in the South Island. The remainder are, I understand, to be shortly issued to the Mounted Rifles in the North Island.

In my last report I pointed out that mess-tins and waterproof sheets were required by the Force. Three thousand mess-tins and four thousand waterproof sheets have already been issued to Officers Commanding Districts for the use of troops.

CLOTHING.

I can only repeat my remarks in my last report, that, although the whole Field Force practically is now in possession of khaki service dress, the appearance is quite spoilt by the various shades of colour and makes of uniform.

Greatcoats should certainly be supplied by some means throughout the Force.

In many cases, but especially in nearly all Cadet corps, the small caps worn are entirely unsuitable for field-work, as they afford no protection whatever from sun or rain.

The boots, which are their own private property, are largely entirely unsuitable, most particularly those worn by many men in town Infantry corps. They are more fit for dancing than field-work, and I am sure increase the number of sick in camp in wet weather.

STANDARD AND SYSTEM OF TRAINING.

Officers and N.C.O.s.

In the annual report of the Council of Defence for the year ending 28th February, 1908, under the "Department of the Chief of the General Staff" on page 4, is a table showing the number of officers who have attended courses of instruction during the previous year, for periods varying from one to ten days, throughout the Dominion, the total number of officers being given as 175. Also the statement is made that courses of six days' continuous training will be held at the various centres for senior and junior officers and for N.C.O.s for the ensuing year.

The following statement also appears in the above report: "The results of the past year bid well for future improvement in the education of officers for the present year. With improvement in the leaders they will in turn train their rank and file, and greater efficiency will be assured."

The facts expressed in the latter sentence are, of course, undeniable. It is, however, much to be regretted that the hope expressed in the former sentence has not been realised.