

During the past year *not one single class or course of instruction* under the Headquarters Instructional Staff has been carried out either for officers or N.C.O.s, owing, I understand, to its having been found impossible to get sufficient numbers to attend.

In three districts District Instructional Classes (under the Officer Commanding District and his A.A.G. alone in the other) have been held, and in the other two districts (Wellington and Nelson) no classes have been held.

These District Classes were all held in the *evenings only*, and, I believe, all indoors.

The duration of the classes varies from one to four nights in Auckland District, five and six nights in Otago District, to twice weekly (for junior officers only) during July and August and October and November in Canterbury District.

Training of Officers.

The total number of officers attending was—Auckland, 15; Otago, 33; Canterbury, 9: total for the Dominion, 57.

The above may be summed up as follows:—

- (1.) No Headquarters classes of instruction whatever have been held during the past year.
- (2.) No classes of instruction at all have been held in daylight or in the field.
- (3.) Only 57 in the Dominion have attended classes at all out of a total of 1,347 Volunteer officers on the strength of the Forces (and then only at night) for the past year, whereas for the year previous 175 officers attended continuous courses of from one to ten days.

No one, I presume, will deny that a Force cannot possibly increase or even retain its efficiency if the officers are not trained, and the above facts are more eloquent than any comment of mine can be.

The above remarks apply to the Field Force, not to the Coast Defence Force or Garrison Artillery, the officers and N.C.O.s of which can be, and are generally, trained to a very satisfactory state of efficiency under existing conditions and with the time at their disposal.

I have clearly stated my reasons for saying this in my two previous annual reports, and need not repeat them in full. Shortly they are because they train where they will fight, if they are ever called upon to fight; their peace training closely resembles the work they will be called upon to do in war; they are stationary, not a mobile force; and they have a much larger proportion of thoroughly competent instructors (the R.N.Z.A.) than any other arm of the service.

It is quite different with the officers and N.C.O.s of the Mobile Field Force, and they can never as a whole become efficient in the time now devoted to their training and without opportunities for instruction and practice in the field.

Training generally.

The preceding remarks on the training of officers of the Coast Defence Force and Mobile Field Force apply with equal force to the rank and file, except that, of course, officers in any walk of life require much more training than their men. The men of the G.A.V. are, with their officers, trained to a satisfactory state of efficiency.

I called attention in my two last reports to the lack of—indeed, in many cases the entire absence of—field-training of the Field Force, and there has been no alteration since in the amount of work demanded, with the single exception that those squadrons of Mounted Rifles which had ceased to work during their camps except in the morning and evening have been ordered to work in the daytime.

With the exception of the mobilisation for my inspections there has been generally no increase in the number of regimental or battalion parades for field-work or in the mobilisation for training the various arms of the service to work together.

It would, moreover, be out of the question to expect that the Field Force as a whole could work satisfactorily until the various smaller units of which it is composed have been trained to their own work by themselves. The proper object of manœuvres is not to *train* the smaller units, much less the individuals of which they are composed, but to *apply* the most severe test practicable in peace to the training they *have* received, and to train the commander and staff. It is therefore obvious that, as most of the units of which our Field Force is composed come to manœuvre camps (such as Easter) practically without *any* preliminary field training (indeed, it is invariably the case that an enormous proportion of the men are absolutely raw recruits), it is impossible under present conditions to hope for satisfactory results, and the time and money are to a large extent wasted.

There is only one way to attain to anything like efficiency in a Force—namely, first to train the recruits as recruits, then the companies as companies, battalions as battalions, and so upwards.

The bulk of the Field Force is, and always will be, Infantry, and I do not think the fact has been grasped that an infantryman, and, indeed, officer, can now under our regulations be called efficient and paid capitation for the year, *without spending one single whole day in the field and without ever going into a camp at all*. All that is required is that he should, in addition to a small number of evening drills in a hall, put in three afternoon parades in the year. Without any other work or instruction, except target shooting, he can remain a so-called efficient soldier as long as he remains in the Force.

As regards preliminary field training the rest of the Field Force is in a slightly better position. The Mounted Rifles get seven days' continuous training in camp; the Field Artillery and Field Engineers have to camp for fourteen days continuously, *but only work in the mornings and evenings*, and go to their ordinary occupations during the day; the Field Artillery, however, get one, and sometimes two, days in the field at their annual practice. These three arms do at any rate get some training in camp routine and discipline, which is not compulsory for infantry.