

I must again impress on all concerned the necessity of officers appreciating more seriously their responsibility for the care and comfort of their men, and for getting to know more of the men in their squadrons and companies, and call attention to the fact that this weakness in our system became at once apparent to the Inspector-General (*vide* paragraph 95 of his report). In many units officers only meet their men at the annual camp, and this opportunity should be taken, and the best use made of it, to get well in touch with the men. No officers can hope to lead their men unless they first capture their respect and are in sympathy with them.

As regards the sites of the camps, from a training point of view nothing much was left to be desired, but that at Kowai was unsuitable owing to the fact that it was badly affected in rainy weather, having been comparatively recently laid down in grass. In choosing a camp-site regard must be paid to the nature of the ground and how it will be affected by bad weather.

I once more take the opportunity of thanking all those patriotic landowners, farmers, and others who lent their land for camping and training purposes. Their names will be found in Appendix B.

Of the assistance given to us at the camps by the various societies, associations, and institutions who, as usual, supplied recreation-tents and comforts for the men, I have spoken so often that little remains for me to say except that at the big camps their value was more than ever apparent, and that I really do not know what we should have done without them. I am only voicing the opinion of all ranks of the Army when I say that our gratitude to them is unbounded.

A summary of camps held (1) by units, (2) by camps, will be found in Appendices A and B. "Casual" camps were also held for those men who were unable owing to various reasons to attend the annual camp of their unit. A total of 18,770 citizen soldiers* have done their annual training in camp, an average of 83·31 per cent. of attendance, as against 83·78 per cent. last year. That the percentage this year was not considerably higher I attribute to the fact that men had to travel farther from their homes than hitherto to get to camp. There was therefore more temptation to stay away both for the shirker and for the man who had genuine difficulty in getting to camp. It is, however, wrong and unsatisfactory that the locality of the statutory annual camp should make any difference in a universal scheme where the number of days for which a man has to be in camp is constant, and where it should not make any difference either to him or to his employer whether he is encamped three miles or three hundred miles from his ordinary place of abode. This matter is receiving attention, and it is hoped to ensure a better percentage of attendance next year.

His Excellency the Governor visited the camp of the Auckland District, and expressed his entire satisfaction with the bearing of the men and the progress made.

3. TRAINING GENERALLY OF THE TERRITORIAL FORCE.

It is unquestionably quite time that the training of the Territorial Force should be undertaken by its own officers and non-commissioned officers, and in this connection I would call special attention to the remarks of the Inspector-General on the subject (paragraphs 65, 90, 95, &c.). I am glad to say that in some units the Territorial Commanders have already assumed their proper responsibilities in this respect, and have been at much pains to render themselves fit for the purpose. The efficiency of these units, as compared with those who still rely almost entirely on the permanent instructor, is most marked. There can be no difficulty about it in the towns, where units are concentrated; in the country, where a subordinate commander has hitherto been rarely able to assemble even a squad of men, the proposed system of concentrated training will remove any difficulty. Only in this way, by determining not only to fit themselves for, but also to practise, the instruction of their men, will Territorial officers and non-commissioned officers acquire the habit of command, without which they cannot expect to lead their men.

During the industrial troubles at the end of last year, which lasted some six weeks, training was practically suspended. In spite of this, considerable progress was made during the year, which made itself evident at the annual camps.

The knowledge and efficiency of the officers and non-commissioned officers of the Territorial Force has shown a marked improvement: this is due in great measure to the special courses of instruction of various kinds which have been held in districts. Still there is much room for improvement, which can only be obtained by courses of instruction, and I trust that the desire for economy which precluded the holding of courses for which money was voted last year will not again prove an obstacle to their being held.

The work of the officers of the New Zealand Staff Corps and non-commissioned officers of the Permanent Staff in the instruction of the Territorial Force and Cadets has been very satisfactory. These officers and non-commissioned officers have worked very hard and shown much zeal and ability in carrying on the work of instruction and administration.

The work and progress of each arm has been dealt with very fully by the Inspector-General in his report; the little that remains for me to say will be found in the succeeding paragraphs.

4. MOUNTED RIFLES.

A great improvement in the training was evident this year. Units might still make more use of ground at their disposal, but in most cases, instead of confining their work to the vicinity of camp, regiments went farther afield and stayed out for the day, taking with them their forage and rations. This gives far more scope for efficient field training. There was a marked improvement in the reduction of fatigue duties and consequent increase of men available for training.

* This number does not include the officers of the New Zealand Staff Corps, the N.C.O.s of the Permanent Staff, or the Cadet officers and members of the Railway battalions and Post and Telegraph Corps who were permitted to attend camp.