

SECTION III.—THE BRANCH OF THE QUARTERMASTER-GENERAL TO THE FORCES.

46. SMALL-ARM AMMUNITION.

The contract with the Colonial Ammunition Company will expire next year. A new contract has been entered into for an extended period, the text of which is in the hands of the parliamentary authorities. The ammunition delivered during the year has been of excellent quality, and the factory has satisfactorily met the increased demands upon it.

47. SMALL-ARMS.

It is satisfactory to know that the stock of small-arms has been such that in spite of the large demand necessary to equip the Expeditionary Forces the training of the home Forces has not been seriously affected as regards arms. The greatest care is being exercised in the preservation and husbanding of our stock in the Dominion, and, with the extra reserve of rifle-barrels and spare parts which we have been accumulating in the past three years, enables us to, where necessary, refit rifles, making them all absolutely fit for service.

48. ACCOUTREMENTS.

The Mills web Infantry equipment, with which the Territorials were equipped, was found excellent for our purpose. At present the Territorial Forces are practically denuded of this useful equipment. I do not recommend any attempt being made to replace this equipment until the experience on campaign proves its value.

Bandoliers for Mounted Rifles and Field Artillery services, and Sam Browne belts for officers, have been manufactured during the year in New Zealand, and the supply so far meets all our demands.

49. CAMP EQUIPMENT.

The establishment of the Expeditionary Force camps, which was concurrent with Territorial training, severely taxed our supplies of camp equipment. Nevertheless the camp training of the Territorial Force has been carried out successfully with a minimum of loss and waste. The erection of the huts at Trentham now approaching completion will enable a saving of tents and marquees to be effected, and these will be available for the coming training season of the Territorial Force.

The Roberts patent cookers are proving of value for military purposes. They are economical when provision has to be made for large bodies of men. This cooker has been largely adopted by the Commonwealth Military Forces.

50. TRANSPORT.

The matter of transport for our Territorial Forces is in the same position as last year—that is, for training and training camps recourse had to be made to hired vehicles. It is hoped this year that a nucleus of transport and harness will be available for use at the coming training-camps.

51. CLOTHING.

During the year, up to the outbreak of war, the normal or peace output was easily met by the contractors. To meet the extraordinary demand it was found necessary to call in the aid of all factories and mills to assist in producing the emergency supply. At times it seemed almost hopeless to expect that we could cope with the demand, but with the co-operation of the various firms the difficulties were met, and I am glad to be able to report that I anticipate no further difficulty, and very shortly hope to complete the Territorial clothing and to be able to send some assistance in this matter to the troops at the front.

52. UNDERCLOTHING, SOCKS, SERVICE BOOTS, SHIRTS, ETC.

These are not articles of issue to the Territorial Force, and on the outbreak of war the work of securing the supplies and of maintaining the supplies fell to this Department. All demands in this direction have been met, and I am glad to report that the standard has been generally maintained.

Boots for the Department for sale at cost price to the Territorial Force have proved satisfactory. However, not being an article of issue, special arrangements had to be made in order to cope with the requirements of the Expeditionary Force. After many difficulties this has been accomplished, and I am glad to report that the output lately arranged for will meet all demands, and if found necessary we may possibly be able to forward surplus quantities to the troops at the front.

53. ARMOURERS.

At the date of the last report there was only one armourer under engagement from the Imperial Government, the remainder of the staff being young men trained in the Dominion. We were fortunately able to find several more or less skilled workers to augment the establishment at the outbreak of war. The whole of this staff is kept busily employed overhauling, repairing, and refitting all the arms in the Dominion to a service standard. As the old scale of pay was not deemed adequate a new scale has recently been adopted, which has been the means of retaining the services of several of these armourers at this time.

54. ELECTRIC-LIGHT STORES.

The electric lighting of the Auckland Forts has been augmented. Owing to the large consumption of carbon for the searchlight during the earlier months of the war the stock on hand was rapidly consumed, and it became necessary to manufacture carbons locally. Professor Easterfield, of Victoria