

- (3.) Civilian dental surgeons, who are employed at recruiting centres (a) to examine and chart the teeth of recruits, (b) to treat the recruits as far as practicable before they are called up for camp, and (c) to treat returned soldiers.

The greatest assistance has been rendered by the executive and members of the New Zealand Dental Association in the creation of this corps, which is now well established.

Thanks are due to the members of the Dental Association generally for good and willing services throughout the Dominion.

43. BASE RECORDS.

Owing to the enormous amount of work necessary in dealing with the records of the members of the Expeditionary Force, the reporting of casualties, and the treatment of returned soldiers, a separate Department designated "Base Records" has been set up under the Adjutant-General's Branch. This Department also acts as an information bureau to the Pensions Board, the Pay Department, and the public at large.

The present establishment consists of 111 military and civil clerks, of whom thirty-one are women. Applications from invalided soldiers are given preference in filling any vacancies which occur. Owing to the cramped accommodation a great strain has at times been placed upon the staff in order to keep the work up to date, particularly upon the heads of sections, who have voluntarily worked long hours in order to secure the prompt despatch of correspondence, which at times amounts to a thousand letters and telegrams per day. The Department is also greatly indebted to a large voluntary staff who have from time to time, when accommodation was available, given their services in three relays—morning, afternoon, and evening—to help in the compilation of history-sheets and other returns required which cannot be undertaken by the permanent staff.

The system of records is as follows: The records of all soldiers are kept in the training-camps until they embark, when a copy is sent to London Records Office, and the original is filed in the Base Records Office, where all information *re* each soldier is added to his file as received.

A file of all Medical Board reports is also prepared, and is forwarded for the use of Medical Boards examining the soldier after his return, and is handed over to the Public Health Department after his discharge, as a record in case further medical treatment becomes necessary.

The Casualty Branch is of great importance, and all notifications are promptly dealt with. On receipt of notice of casualty the next-of-kin are at once notified by urgent telegram. The casualty list is put in the safe, and not released to the Press or public for twenty-four hours after the despatch of advice to the next-of-kin. In this manner it is almost impossible for the relatives of any soldier to hear through the Press of any casualty happening to him before they have been informed by the Base Records Office.

As it was found impossible to secure suitable premises to house the soldiers' records and the Base Records Staff a temporary building is now being erected behind the Government Buildings, where it is anticipated the work will be carried on without the many disadvantages under which the staff has hitherto been working. This Department must necessarily continue to increase its staff so long as reinforcements continue to be despatched.

The Director of Base Records and his staff have done excellent work in evolving a system which so far has been able to cope with the heavy demands it is from time to time called on to meet.

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

44. SMALL-ARMS AMMUNITION.

The Colonial Ammunition Company has well maintained the supply of small-arms ammunition, and the high standard is well up to previous years, although working at exceptional pressure. In this respect credit must be given the Department's Inspector, who is ever watchful of the interests of the Department.

45. SMALL-ARMS.

In order to maintain sufficient arms for training the reinforcements in camp, and to equip the drafts proceeding to the front, it was necessary to withdraw a proportion of rifles from the Cadets, leaving them, however, sufficient for musketry training purposes. The whole of the collected arms were concentrated at the chief armoury at Wellington, thoroughly overhauled, and rebarrelled where necessary. An armourer has been stationed in camp, and has on charge a supply of small-arms components for repair of any rifles damaged during training. He also instructs armourers appointed in camp (usually tradesmen) to effect repairs. This must prove an advantage to regiments at the front, as the supply of qualified armourers is very limited there.

46. ACCOUTREMENTS.

The supply of Mills web equipment remains practically as last year, principally concentrated in the two training-camps. Endeavours have been made to produce a substitute locally, but so far without success, principally owing to the fact that suitable material is not procurable.

Bandoliers (leather) for mounted services, Field Artillery, and Engineers are made locally; also Sam Browne belts for officers. There has been no difficulty in obtaining sufficient supply of any leather accoutrements required.

47. CAMP EQUIPMENT.

All tents (circular) and marquees (hospital) have been in constant use during the year, and consequently are considerably the worse for wear; but now that the hutments are completed the tents and marquees can be overhauled and repaired, and a number will be available for summer training-camps.