

promoted to his present rank. This may be true, but his case must be added to the general evidence, of which there was a good deal, that soldiers are seen in a state of intoxication on the island and that they sometimes appear in this condition at roll-call and other parades.

This is a most undesirable state of affairs. If the evidence is exaggerated it is because such exaggerations are almost certain to result from the growing disrespect which inevitably ensues from such conduct.

It must be observed that this source of irritation cannot be wholly controlled by the Commandant. There is a large staff—apparently over forty men in all. From this staff I understand that something like two hundred have gone out on active service, implying a corresponding number of replacements. The men are not selected by the Commandant, and their failings cannot always be ascertained by those who select them.

Apart from care in selecting men, this matter must now be dealt with unsparingly by the proper authorities both on the island and at Wellington. It cannot, as I have said, be controlled by the Commandant alone. His orderly-room records show convictions and disratings for drunkenness. This is not always attributable to the case of men coming ashore drunk. It must in some instances represent the fact of men bringing liquor with them from the mainland, for none is procurable on the island.

I recommend that a set of explicit and stringent rules be drawn up as to the conduct of men in this respect, and that these include the reporting of men intoxicated on the island. In the case of non-commissioned officers it should be understood that men offending in this respect, at any rate on repeating the offence, should be liable to be removed from the service. The rules should further provide absolutely against the bringing of liquor to the island.

IRRITATING LANGUAGE.

The principal individual complaint on this head is against Major Matheson—that on the 16th August, 1916, he used disrespectful expressions respecting the German Emperor when addressing a large body of prisoners of war. That he did so he admits. I do not attempt to quote the expressions complained of, as the document, purporting to be a report from memory of the speech, is not actually proved. Nor need I consider Major Matheson's excuse for addressing the prisoners. It is sufficient to say that from no point of view can this be justified, and this Major Matheson admits. The incident seems to have caused great offence and to have rankled in the minds of many hearers. This kind of thing coming from an officer whose duty it is to avoid everything tending to cause irritation is inexcusable, and it certainly tends to undermine the authority of an officer, whose conduct towards men in subordination to himself should always be dignified if he seeks to secure their respect. This kind of tactless conduct spreads downwards by example.

Complaints of similar conduct on the part of guards, however, have not the same force, though this too should be checked and discouraged. These men read statements from neutral newspapers to the effect that the Emperor has listened to his soldiers singing Lissauer's "Hymn of Hate," and from a similar source that he has even decorated Lissauer. When they hear this kind of thing they recall statements to the effect that the shooting of Nurse Cavell was not merely the act of the Governor of Brussels, but was approved at Berlin, and that other incidents of the same kind are attributable to the Emperor's Government. The men who hear these things from neutral sources and believe them are perhaps uneducated men, and it is not surprising that they should express themselves in their own way respecting the enemy Sovereign. One man complained that when in the Wellington Hospital he was annoyed by a nurse talking in his presence about the sinking of the "Lusitania," and was glad to get back to the island. Men and women who are said to speak disrespectfully of the German Sovereign may find some excuse in the fact that representations of a medal, allowed to circulate freely in Germany, exhibiting the sinking of the "Lusitania" in a comic aspect, have long since reached New Zealand. One of them appears in the book recently published by Mr. Gerard, formerly United States Ambassador at Berlin. It is