

During the past year this section has carried out repairs and alterations to various hospitals, drill-halls, and Defence buildings. A portion of Featherston Camp has been dismantled, and a number of the hutments have been sold, some to Government Departments and some privately. A few hutments have been re-erected for use as drill-halls at small training-centres and at Burnham mobilization depot.

A successful experiment has also been made by converting a camp hut into a married quarters, and further work in this direction is proposed during the ensuing year.

It is proposed to arrange for all new works, as well as maintenance of existing buildings, drill-halls, and rifle ranges, to be carried out in future by the Public Works Department, the actual cost of services rendered to the Defence Department being charged to the annual Defence vote.

7. MEDICAL SERVICES.

The Medical Branch of the Defence Department is still responsible for the administration of war hospitals for "service" patients and for out-patient treatment of ex-soldiers, but arrangements are now being made to gradually hand over these hospitals to the Public Health Department, and Pukeora Sanatorium will be placed under the latter Department as from the 1st August. I recommend that the whole of the administrative arrangements for the after-care of disabled soldiers be transferred to the Pensions Department, and that this Department be entirely responsible for administration as well as payment of pensions and allowances to disabled soldiers and their dependants. If this proposal was given effect to the Defence Department would be free to devote the whole of its energies to its proper functions; there would be fewer Departments dealing with the ex-soldier; administration would be simplified, and economy would be effected without prejudice to the interests of the men concerned.

Attached is a report (*vide* Appendix II) by the Director-General of Medical Services on the work of the Medical Branch during the past year, from which report it will be seen that everything possible has been done for the comfort and welfare of the patients.

8. SCHOOL OF INSTRUCTION.

The School of Instruction at Trentham continues to do excellent work in giving refresher courses to officers and non-commissioned officers of the Permanent Forces and of the Territorial Force and Cadets from all parts of the Dominion.

When a training-depot has been provided in each of the three commands greater numbers can be trained, and the central school will take up its proper role of training only instructors and officers for the Territorial Force.

9. ROYAL MILITARY COLLEGE OF AUSTRALIA.

There are at present thirteen New Zealand Cadets undergoing training at Duntroon. During the year nine Cadets graduated and returned to the Dominion; they have been commissioned as Lieutenants, and posted for duty in districts. One of these officers attained the rank of battalion sergeant-major while at the College, and at the conclusion of the term of training he was awarded the Sword of Honour. This is the second occasion on which a New Zealand Cadet has won this high distinction.

Only two candidates presented themselves for the entrance examination to the College for this year's classes, neither was successful in passing the required examination, consequently no candidates are being sent to Duntroon this year.

10. STAFF COLLEGE.

No officers were sent to the Staff College during the year 1920, but Lieut.-Colonel H. E. Avery, C.M.G., D.S.O., is now attending the 1921 course at Camberley, England.

The War Office has been good enough to allot to New Zealand two vacancies per annum at each of the Staff Colleges, Camberley and Quetta (India).

While it costs a considerable sum of money to send officers to Imperial Staff colleges, the expenditure is fully justified, as it enables our officers to obtain training in staff duties, which it is impossible to obtain in the Dominion, and to qualify themselves for the higher military appointments. It also has very great value in securing uniformity of thought in connection with the principles of military science between various parts of the Empire, and thus greatly facilitates that co-ordination which is essential to success in war. Also, it helps to preserve the standard of equality between the officers of the Permanent Forces of New Zealand and the officers of the British Regular Army.

11. TRAINING OF OFFICERS IN INDIA.

In accordance with arrangements made with the Army Council, six officers who had graduated from the Royal Military College of Australia in 1918 were, on the 25th September, 1919, despatched to India to undergo a tour of duty for one year with units of the British Army stationed there. These officers were first of all attached to Cavalry, Artillery, Engineer, or Infantry units for short periods, to gain experience in regimental life. Most of them either saw service or were stationed in the theatre of operations, and before their attachment terminated several were employed on staff duties.

In India Lieutenant A. M. Sutherland, a very promising officer, succumbed to enteric fever, and his loss is greatly deplored.

The remainder of the party have now returned to duty in New Zealand after having undergone a period of very useful training.

On the 11th November, 1920, six officers who graduated from the Royal Military College of Australia in 1919 left for India on a similar tour of duty. Shortly after this party arrived in India Lieutenant C. H. G. Davis contracted smallpox and died. His untimely death, which removes another very promising young officer from the Permanent Forces, is very much regretted.