Again, if at the outbreak of war, information is distributed to troops giving every detail of the prospective theatre of war, the result will be a feeling of confidence in Generals and Staffs that may be invaluable.

Peace Reconnaissance.

I had the honour of writing three or four pages of the latest edition of the F. S. Pocket Book on Reconnaissance, pages 64-68, to which I may refer you for certain details for which we have no time here. Three things strike me about the average Reconnaissance report:—

1. The amount of unnecessary information sent in, out of which the good stuff has to be laboriously dug.

2. The want of even a measure of uniformity in the form of the report.

3. The verbose style of many reports.

Experience is the great thing; an officer's second report is usually half the size and twice the value of his first attempt.

The first step towards a satisfactory report is for the reconnoitering officer to be given a clear and definite idea of what is required, with possibly a sample report to guide him. For instance, some officers would consider that a billeting reconnaissance should include elaborate details of railways, bridges and tactical considerations, all of which do affect billeting to some degree. Personally, I think if one attempts too much one accomplishes comparatively little, and it is better to confine oneself to the job in hand, the extraneous points being treated generally.

As regards the form, the most satisfactory method is to divide the report into two parts. The first part should be "form at a glance": that is to say, the salient points should be given which can be seen rapidly. Part II should contain the details in tabular form.

There are disadvantages as well as advantages to using a fixed form, but I think the latter outweighs the former. If the same form is always used, one knows in a minute where to look for certain items of information; in addition the form acts as a refresher to the memory, and if reports are eventually to be bound together, the fact that they are similar in form,