

SESSIONAL PAPER No. 35b

63. Of these recommendations, the third is already being carried out; the first and second can easily be adopted; while the remainder are concurred in but must depend upon the money provided in Estimates for building purposes.

REGIMENTAL OFFICERS.

64. The remarks which the Imperial Inspector General makes on the subject of regimental officers may be summarized as follows:—

(a) As regards Commanding Officers, he considers that, provided the tests prescribed by regulation are strictly enforced, their qualifications ought to be sufficient. But he gathers that these are not always enforced. And he notices that Commanding Officers do not enough realize the supreme importance of thorough squadron and company training (and do not appear competent themselves to supervise such training by Squadron and Company Commanders.

(b) As regards Squadron, Battery and Company Commanders, he considers that there is generally much room for improvement. They often do not know how to teach their men, and they do not inculcate or maintain discipline. He thinks that here too the tests must have been relaxed.

65. Practically the points here raised are the same, viz., the failure to enforce the tests laid down by regulation. This charge is largely true. I have several times pointed out the danger of allowing the examination standards to be relaxed, especially in Provisional Schools. The reply given to me has been that, if they were enforced, nine out of every ten officers would fail at the examination, because the length of course they were prepared to undergo was too short for them to learn all that the regulation standard required. To which the answer, of course, is 'Then let them fail; only in that way can they find out how much there is to learn.'

66. Undoubtedly our critic is right, and qualification tests ought to be strictly enforced. The remedy appears to be simple.

NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICERS AND MEN.

67. Scarcely less importance is attached by the Imperial Inspector General to the selection and qualification of N.C.O.'s, in whom he has observed many deficiencies. He recommends great care in selection and every assistance as regards instruction. The Council have long been fully alive to the importance of the non-commissioned ranks and the necessity for better qualified N.C.O.'s. But it is a question fraught with many difficulties, and the solution has not yet been found.

68. He was, on the whole, favourably impressed with the men in the ranks. His only recommendation is that the fulfilment of the three years' term of engagement should be insisted upon. This question is also one of some difficulty. I am inclined to think that, after fair warning being given, judicious enforcement of the law would have a good effect.

HORSE SUPPLY.

69. The Inspector General discusses the question of the supply of horses required for war, and finds that satisfactory arrangements for it do not exist. He points out that, within three months of the outbreak of a war, 33,000 remounts would be needed.

70. He recommends, to deal with the matter, the appointment of an Assistant Director of Remounts, with a suitable inspection and Veterinary Staff, whose duties he enumerates. He also suggests a small permanent remount depot to supply the needs of the Permanent Force.