

training before brigading, as in the English programme, could be secured. Unfortunately the battalions which we muster in camps of instruction are invariably rural corps, and contain so large a proportion of recruits that the whole nine days available for instruction are spent in the rudiments of drill. Under these circumstances it becomes a question whether the large expense entailed in brigading the troops is justified by the results obtained. In many corps of instruction the whole time is spent in squad, company and elementary battalion drill, and in target practice, and the force in camp is sometimes never assembled as a brigade.

Is it not possible that better results might be obtained by organizing battalion camps instead of brigade camps, always provided that the battalion could be under competent staff drill and inspection during the period of camp?

BRITISH OFFICERS AND THEIR WEAPONS.

(Communicated to the Broad Arrow.)

The question as to the proficiency of British officers in the use of the weapons which form their equipment is seldom raised. Yet the whole subject is of great importance, not only to individuals, but to the army at large. That an officer should be able to act both on the defensive and offensive when necessary is indeed of vital interest. How many a brave fellow might still be unmourned had only the importance of a proper training with the sword and revolver been recognized sooner! The matter seems to be little considered, chiefly for two reasons: firstly, because it appears mainly a subject for individual effort; secondly, because the conditions of fighting have so completely changed with the introduction of long-range weapons, that hand-to-hand encounters seem generally to be looked upon as belonging to a past epoch in military history. The whole matter can best be summarised by a question: Is the British officer—more especially of the infantry—capable, with the training he receives, of successfully defending himself, or of acting on the offensive, with the arms authorized to be carried by him? It is hardly necessary to remark that no allusion is here being made to personal courage, either moral or physical, but merely as to the efficiency and science with which the sword and revolver can be handled. Neither need any comparison be made as to whether the British officer is a better swordsman than he in the armies of continental powers. That is not the point; it is a weak thing to seek comfort in the reflection that although we are not proficient in such and such an art, yet those who may be opposed to us are no better.

Let us glance briefly at the present system of instruction as imparted to officers. Firstly as regards the sword. On joining the cavalry, the regulations require that the young officer be put through a course of fencing. So far, so good. But with respect to infantry, instruction to officers is only to be imparted when there happens to be a military gymnasium at the station. The regulation relative to fencing further adds, "All other officers should be encouraged to practise this exercise during their leisure hours as much as possible." This appears to be an ingenious way the authorities have of ridding themselves of any responsibility in the matter. Then there is, besides this initiation into the art of fencing, the laughable farce called sword exercise, gone through at irregular intervals. Who will dare to say that the performance given by regimental officers before the general at his annual inspection is of any practical value at all? It must be admitted, therefore, that the training an officer undergoes does not tend to make him an expert swordsman.

What then can be said of the revolver? This firearm is generally understood, in a covert kind of way, to be an authorized weapon of the British officer. Few officers on home service possess one, and still fewer have opportunities for revolver practice; and yet, were these officers ordered on active service, nearly the first article they would provide themselves with would be a revolver. What an exceedingly comical army it would be in which the rank and file were only supplied with rifles just before their departure for service in the field! In England no attempt is made to train officers to shoot with the revolver: it may almost be said that the existence of such a weapon seems to be ignored. In India matters are slightly better, for every officer has annually to expend twenty-four rounds of pistol ammunition. Fancy! an allowance of twenty-four rounds in a year to efficiently exercise officers in the use of the most difficult firearm ever invented! It is a fact to be regretted, but one which happily can be remedied, that the knowledge which the majority of officers have of the use of their revolvers is rather less than their knowledge of swordsmanship. This state of things, it must be borne in mind, is not the fault of officers themselves. In seeking a remedy for the evil, the chief point to be kept in view is to provide opportunities for all officers to improve their skill with arms.

The first act of the authorities ought to be the construction of at least two revolver ranges in every barrack in the United Kingdom. These would be but small matters in themselves, and occupy but little room, but when once they are in existence, one great difficulty under which officers desirous of improving their shooting now labour will be removed. Besides this, every regiment of cavalry, battalion of infantry, and battery of artillery should be enabled to start its own school of arms. A special fencing instructor, whose duty it should be to divide his attention between the different corps in a garrison, should be appointed to every station where troops are quartered. Special classes, with certificates obtainable at their close, might also be held at large military centres, solely for the training of officers in fencing and revolver shooting. Once a year one great inter-regimental contest could be instituted and held simultaneously at different stations throughout the country, every regiment being obliged to be represented by a team of at least six officers. In the confidential reports at a general's annual inspection, special mention should be made of the pistol shooting and swordsmanship carried on during the preceding twelve months. Again, a return of all matches shot might be submitted quarterly, together with the results, to the headquarters of the respective districts. Finally, it would ensure the due practice of arms, so essential for the safety of officers, if fencing and revolver shooting were included in the examination for promotion. This, roughly, is a scheme whereby an important matter might receive the attention due to it. Were it adopted, the British army—officered as it is at present by the bravest gentlemen any force can show—would undoubtedly contain some of the most deadly shots and finest swordsmen in Europe.

OTTAWA SOLDIERS ON DUTY.

Another has been added to the long list of services rendered by the Canadian Militia in aid of the Civil power. Last week a strike occurred at the lumber mills adjoining the Chaudiere Falls in Ottawa and Hull. About 1,500 men quit work to demand shorter hours and higher pay, the great majority going rather unwillingly at the command of the leaders. An attempt was made to force out also the employees in the Eddy factories at Hull, and entrance to these places was forcibly gained, Mr. Eddy and his chief assistants being rather roughly handled. At Wright's quarries also the men were compelled to quit, and Mr. C. B.