

Little need be said of the work of this Bureau, though the importance of it is great at a moment when then Organization and Mobilisation are the most stirring military questions. But, consider the power and certainty such help as that of the talented Officers employed, gives to the military authorities during Parliamentary discussions. In fact, the law on the cadres has just now been settled by mutual agreement, although a severe conflict on the question was supposed to be impending. And everybody is satisfied. Is not this better than our plan of Royal Commissions and Parliamentary Committees succeeding each other in a weary series, the members approaching the subject with only one certainty,—that it is perfectly new to them and they must learn its rudiments?

2ND BUREAU.

Foreign Armies and Navies.

Twenty four Officers are employed in this Bureau alone and the number is found insufficient.

The studies are precisely similar to those of the Prussian "Three Sections," and the Austrian Section for "Statistics of Foreign Armies." Great Powers are studied separately, small ones in groups. The studies comprise, military institutions, organization, instruction, men, material, establishments. Naval affairs are treated generally, in less detail than the land services.

All this information must not only be in the possession of the Bureau, but must be so arranged and co-ordinated as to be at disposal for the immediate enlightenment of the Government or authorities interested.

Moreover, to the 2nd Bureau is confided the task of spreading such information as may be desirable among the Officers and men of the Army generally.

This duty is performed by periodical or special publications, such, for instance, as the "Revue Militaire de l'Etranger." The French Government and military authorities have accepted the truth that it is not enough to have information accumulated at head-quarters, but that it is wise to diffuse a knowledge of foreign military systems as widely as possible. Every encouragement is given to officers to study such subjects, and to travel for the purpose.

This Bureau receives and deals with the reports of the Military Attachés, and is responsible for bringing any valuable information contained in them to the notice of the authorities specially interested in it. By this course every head of a department knows that nothing interesting will escape him, while he is not burthened with the task of reading a mass of MS. which does not concern him.

The military attachés of French embassies, like those of Prussia and Austria, report directly to the Minister of War or the Chief of the Staff. In any case the Staff receives and deals with the despatches at once. English military attachés report to the ambassador. Their despatches go to the Foreign Office, and thence through many hands before they reach the Intelligence Branch. Is not this system rather unpractical?

Before the late war, and its remarkable lessons, the French system was highly unpractical. Not only Colonel Stoffel's despatches, but the reports of numerous Officers sent to travel in Germany, called attention in the strongest terms to the superiority of the German organization for war, and to the extraordinary development of the military art in the country of Frederick the Great. Nay more, the inferiority of the

French system was frequently insisted on. The reports were received, docked, and carefully pigeon-holed in the War Depot, but, from the want of a department responsible for utilizing the information contained in them, those important documents were suffered to lie unread and unknown by the great officials in whose hands had been placed and the safety and honour of the French nation.

The lesson has been a severe one, and the result is that at the present moment the chief anxiety is not to hide, but to diffuse information as widely as possible. Not only does the 2nd Bureau publish its papers, but Government money has been granted for the encouragement of the "Réunion des Officiers," an institution first established by private members, but now recognized as a means of bringing to the light of day, opinions, often crude enough, held by individuals concerning home or foreign military affairs. The publications of the Réunion are sometimes valuable to the authorities, always a safety valve for that intellectual energy so characteristic of the French. Thus a former source of bitterness and grumbling against authority has been turned into a well spring of information and contentment.

2ND BUREAU.

This Bureau is at present one of the most important and active in France, though many of its functions are of a temporary character, and will cease when the epoch of change ceases, when the Army is fairly re-organized, and the studies which must precede modern campaigns are completed so far as only to need periodical revision.

It is divided into four sections—

1st Section.

Preparation of Military Operations.—Study of probable theatres of operations at home and abroad, Travels of the Staff Officers, Grand manœuvres.

2nd Section.

Instruction of the Army as a whole.—Questions relating to general instruction of the Army. Preparations of rules applicable to all arms—e.g., regulations for service in the field.

3rd Section.

Study and Arrangement of Documents necessary for Armies Taking the Field.—Such as maps, statistics, military topography.

4th Section.

Histories.—Assembly of historical documents relative to the last campaign. Study of these documents with the object extracting useful information from them, especially the modifications which should be introduced in the tactics of the different arms.

Think for a moment what this office has to do. No less than to plan the defence of the country and the best means of attacking other countries. The same studies are pursued by Prussia, Austria and other Powers. Surely we had better keep our eyes open to this fact. Now, strategical studies such as these must be based upon accurate and detailed knowledge, or they will not be worth the paper they are written upon. To gather the accurate details, all the army is at work. No less than 80 Officers of the garrison of Paris have been occupied in studying the surrounding country with a view to the thoroughly scientific defence of the place. Let me earnestly beg you to turn over in your minds this necessity for employing Officers outside any new Intelligence Department. Without such aid facts must be

winning, and all calculations must be precise and decisive. Whoever had good will and common sense can assist in some part of the work. Neither are great talents required nor high education, but the work in itself is full of interest and instruction.

Officers belonging to the 3rd Bureau attend Autumn Manœuvres, and report on various interesting points for the information of their chief.

4TH BUREAU.

Railway Service and Movements of Troops. Lines of Communications.

Divided into two Sections.

1st Sections, Railway Sections.

Duties.—Work indicated by the "Superior Committee on Railways." (explained hereafter). Studies relative to the execution of this work, Relation with the railway companies.

2nd Section.

Execution of the Movements of Troops.—Sending the detailed orders required to carry out Ministerial decisions; Correspondence relative to all the movements of troops at home, and to or within Africa.

In November, 1872, a Committee was appointed to consider the whole question of railway transport and lines of communication. Its Report was adopted last July, and is now the basis for the work of the 4th Bureau. The scheme recommended and adopted is most interesting and instructive. The Report has been translated for the Intelligence Branch and would be published at once but for that terrible bugbear, the cost of printing.

There is no time to enter here into the details of the Report. Suffice it to say that all sorts of contingencies in war and peace are provided for, even flying trains to be always kept packed full of provisions not far in the rear of operating armies.

The great principle is to combine the labours of Staff Officers who know what is wanted, with that of railway officials who know how best to supply the thing required.

France is divided into six great railway systems, each of which is placed under a Staff Officer who is called the "Commissaire d'Etude" for the line and its tributaries. Attached to him is a "superior agent," and the two form a committee with very definite duties and powers. They have to carry out the instructions contained in the Report, and they have legal power to do so. Provision is made for experiments and for practice of the troops. The Report can be bought in Paris, and is well worth reading, even by those whose duties are not likely to place them in charge of railways or lines of communication.

5TH BUREAU (War Depot).

The War Depot is chiefly concerned with the care of maps, books, and instruments, and with alterations to be made in the maps and statistics of the country.

It employs 16 Officers, 12 of whom are on the Staff, and a number of other employes.

GENERAL REMARKS.

If we now look back for a moment on the ground we have passed over, we shall see that the strictly Intelligence Duties of the Staff in Prussia, Austria, and France are directed and performed by Staff Officers devoted to that particular work, aided by the whole of the Staff corps, divisions and brigades, and, in France, where the work has hitherto been more or less neglected, by all the available talent of the Army.