

command of the militia. He has been with us now sufficiently long to enable us to appreciate his work. Before coming here he had some experience of the militia of Canada, because he is one of the ablest soldiers which the great empire found it necessary to send to South Africa. I propose to read some extracts from his report, so as to show where we stand in connection with those very important matters to which my hon. friend the Minister of Militia has alluded. In his report he says:

I have proposed that in future the regimental establishments of the active militia shall be at war strength, each unit containing in addition within itself the germ of a reserve. These proposals have met with your general approval, and I am now drawing up the establishments which, when complete, I will submit to you.

I may say that in his report he gives no explanation about the result, but my hon. friend has given us some insight into that. The Major General proceeds to say:

These camps of instruction covered a total period of twenty-five days, the whole of which I devoted to the personal supervision of the training, visiting each camp in turn.

As men who have only nine working days in the year to learn their duties as soldiers and non-commissioned officers cannot afford to spend any of that time on ceremonial, I arranged that instruction should be entirely devoted to practical work.

The officers and men under instruction worked with great zeal and intelligence, and though the system was in many cases quite new to them, they picked it up very quickly, and the tactical exercises engaged in towards the end of the training were useful in showing to all ranks how much they had still to learn before they could be considered efficient soldiers, let alone non-commissioned officers qualified to instruct and lead others.

Observation at these camps has shown me that the Canadian soldier takes the greatest interest in anything which his intelligence proves to him is of real practical benefit. Therefore, I propose in future to leave out marches past and ceremonial, and instead to convert the camps practically into schools of instruction for fitting the soldier to take the field, with not one item in the programme that does not make for fighting efficiency.

Though the rural militia contains a large proportion of earnest, self-sacrificing officers and men, it does not satisfy the requirements of a national defence force. Nominally it is a body of men who engage to serve for a period of three years. As a matter of fact it consists and always has consisted of a number of regiments which are almost recruited afresh every time they are called out for training. Large numbers of entirely raw men enlist before the particular training and are perhaps never seen afterwards, no real effort being made to compel them to fulfil their engagement, owing to powers of compulsion being quite inadequate for the purpose. Consequently it is impossible to carry instruction beyond the most elementary stages. Such a system is unduly expensive and ineffective from a military point of view. So small is the rate of pay, and so unsatisfactory have been the conditions of training, that the best men do not enter the militia as they might. From this it follows that the non-commissioned officers also are to a large extent insufficiently qualified for their posts, nor can they command ready

obedience from the soldier when, as in many cases, they are quite ignorant of the very rudiments of their duties. Numbers of men go out to camp as non-commissioned officers without any previous training whatever, and the proportion of these men who are new to the rank on such occasions shows clearly that there is a want of continuity in the personnel of the units.

As with some of the non-commissioned officers, so it is with some of the officers. Many have evidently not studied their profession sufficiently to act as the leaders and instructors of their non-commissioned officers and men. I make suggestions, later, on this matter.

Self-instruction by means of books, lectures to their men in well-appointed comfortable armoured (when these are provided) during the winter, and thoroughly practical work in the summer months will, joined with the excellent spirit which pervades the officer class of the Canadian militia, soon, I anticipate, produce the required result.

Material.

There is a great deficiency of all kinds of military stores and material essential for active service. This deficiency should be made good in time of peace.

It is absolutely necessary that the regulation allowance of every article of equipment required for mobilization of companies should be at company headquarters, for regimental mobilization at regimental headquarters.

Though there appears to be almost a sufficient stock of camp equipment for the existing units at their present strength, there is certainly no reserve available for the large force which would have to be placed in the field in time of war.

City Corps.

The city regiments, under the present organization would as a whole be the easiest to mobilize, but even they cannot in any sense be said to approach a state of readiness to take the field. They labour under the greatest difficulties and disadvantages. They all suffer from want of field training, owing to the fact that they get practically no camp experience. The allowances for instruction are too small; so, in the most efficient of the corps much of the necessary expense has to be undertaken by the officers and men instead of by the public. This unfair expense causes the loss of many good officers to the country. Many corps suffer from want of proper accommodation in the way of armouries, &c. Deficiencies of this kind have either to be made up by private effort or the corps must suffer.

Army Service Corps.

This branch of the service has been started this year. Of the four skeleton companies authorized, two are now complete and another is in process of organization. Lieutenant Colonel Biggar and two non-commissioned officers were sent to Aldershot where they were given every advantage by the authorities to gain information on army service corps work.

Since his return to Canada, Lieutenant Colonel Biggar has conducted a six weeks' course of instruction at Montreal with the company there, with satisfactory results.

He goes on to speak very highly of the school of musketry, and I think I will read part of that, because I consider that one of the most important improvements that have been made:

School of Musketry.

Courses of instruction were held during the months of July and August at the Rockcliffe Rifle