

the year. Moreover, I have always found on inquiry that such units have been lucky either in possessing a particularly efficient officer or officers living on the spot, or in having a Permanent instructor residing close to them and taking a keen interest in their efficiency. Where conditions such as these exist I am practically certain that Cadet training, and the money it costs, will be fully justified from the military standpoint.

Difficulties in the Country.

77. On the other hand, I have seen Cadets collected from backblocks, and from sparsely inhabited districts, and hastily organized into improvised companies and battalions, who neither individually nor collectively show much promise of giving the State an adequate return for the sums expended on their military training and education. That this is so is in no wise the fault of the Cadets themselves. No finer raw material could be found anywhere, and the spirit of the lads is excellent; but the conditions under which they train seem to place an insurmountable barrier between them and the attainment of even a moderate standard of proficiency. They seldom see a Permanent instructor, and when that official does make one of his rare appearances, his time is mostly taken up with a mixed lot of trained soldiers and recruits who are in every stage of development. As time passes, matters will tend to grow worse in these respects, for, later on, he will also have to supervise the training of the men of the General Training Section and of Reservists. It is, I regret to say, my deliberate opinion that, in scattered country districts, the existing system of Cadet training will prove itself incapable of replacing satisfactorily the concentrated period of adult recruit training given in other armies.

Cadet Concentrations in Country.

78. What, then, is the remedy for a disability which affects perhaps 25 per cent. of the Force? To such an inquiry there can be but one answer. If home training cannot be improved it must be abolished. Improvement to any appreciable extent would entail a large increase in the number of the Permanent Staff. In addition to the pay of the extra instructors, the large sums now disbursed on travelling and detention allowances would be doubled or even trebled. Even then it is questionable whether an adequate return for the money expended could be obtained. It would, I believe, be found much cheaper in the long-run, as well as more to the liking of the lads themselves, if in country districts they were collected for fourteen days at certain centres, with a sufficiency of Permanent instructors present to make sure that they were thoroughly wheeled into line. In Natal (where compulsory Cadet training has been in existence for more than twenty years) the practice of holding Cadet camps has, as I can testify after personal inspection, been attended with the happiest results—so much so that the Government of South Africa proposes to adopt them throughout the States of the Union.

An Alternative for Cadet Training.

79. The only other alternative is to follow the Swiss system for lads in outlying districts, and in their case dispense altogether with Cadet training. The period of concentrated recruit training at fixed centres should, in this event, be not less than eight weeks. The men concerned would become liable on attaining their eighteenth year. This alternative has the double disadvantage that the men under training would have to be paid, and that the indirect loss to the country of having so many adults removed from the labour-market would be seriously felt. In other words, the change of system would be costly. But a more serious drawback, in my opinion, than even the enhanced cost lies in the fact that the inestimable advantages of Cadet training would then be lost to the very class of lads who most of all require them. Such an alternative as this should only be resorted to after every other expedient has been given a fair trial and has failed.

Unit Concentrations in Country.

80. If it is expedient to differentiate between town and country in the matter of Cadet and recruit training, the arguments that apply in their case will, I imagine, be found to apply even more strongly in the case of the trained soldier. After carefully inspecting many country corps, I am quite certain that the one thing the men require above all others is to be brought into closer touch with their own officers and non-commissioned officers. Casual drilling by a peripatetic instructor can never compensate for this personal touch between officers and men which, in a Citizen Force, can only be established during the period of company and squadron training.

Here, again, a clear line of demarcation can be drawn. Wherever a squadron or company can, without undue hardship, be collected to drill and exercise as a unit under its own officers, there the existing system of home training is perfectly sound. Otherwise it would unquestionably be preferable to substitute for home training a concentrated squadron or company training of at least a week's duration, to be held at some convenient place and time prior to the assembly of the battalion or regiment for its statutory annual training.

How carried out.

81. Squadron or company concentrations should be arranged locally by squadron and company commanders; the less the higher authorities interfere the better. They should not cost much. Rations and forage only would have to be provided by Government. Pay would be unnecessary, in that the men would only be carrying out an obligation which their comrades in the town fulfil without payment. In many instances camp equipment would be unnecessary, as accommodation in barns, in shearing-sheds, or even in billets, could doubtless be arranged for locally.