

In Territorial camps injuries resulting from kicks received on the horse-lines still furnish the great majority of cases requiring treatment, and provide the bulk of claims received from owners for compensation for loss or disablement of their horses. The prevention of such accidents is highly desirable, but it is a somewhat difficult matter, seeing that the horses brought to Territorial camps have not been accustomed to be tied up in the company of other horses. They are strangers to each other, and this no doubt increases the tendency to kick. An increased number of pickets on the lines at night, and thorough supervision in the direction of ensuring that they exhibit no laxity in carrying out the duty, would help to prevent this trouble. Also, officers and men of Mounted Territorial regiments should be impressed with the necessity of never bringing to camp horses which have a habit of kicking when in company with others. The extension of the lines to accommodate horses at wider intervals would be another method, but this would necessitate the occupation of a much greater area, and be liable to objection on that account. Another point that should be mentioned in this connection is the habit of horses biting through their halters and getting loose. This leads to endless trouble and numerous accidents. To avoid such mishaps it is suggested that, in place of rope halters, light head-collars or leather head-stalls with chains be provided, together with proper arrangements for attaching the same firmly to the picket-lines.

Strangles and ringworm have been the most conspicuous ailments among the horses of the Expeditionary Force prior to leaving New Zealand. Thanks, however, to energetic treatment, involving the effective isolation of all such cases, together with suspects, these highly infectious diseases have never assumed formidable proportions. Their appearance has entailed constant watchfulness on the part of the Veterinary Officers in charge and the non-commissioned officers and men of the Veterinary Corps. The assistance of the latter has been of great value in observing cases in the initial stage, and ensuring their prompt removal from the lines.

In conclusion, it is pleasing to report that the work of the corps throughout the year has been of a very satisfactory character, and the services of officers have been duly recognized by all ranks of the mounted units.

65. TRAINING AND MANŒUVRE AREAS.

The area reserved for a training and manœuvre ground in the Waimarino district was not used during the year, the annual field training having been carried out by units in regimental camps within their Territorial districts; nor will it be possible, as previously indicated, to utilize it till able to concentrate the troops in the North Island there for training and manœuvres without the loss of time and difficulties arising from the present facilities for transport and communication. The reserve, however, remains a valuable departmental asset, and provides an area which would be incalculably more expensive and difficult to secure as settlement extends.

The area selected in the Waimakariri district as a central training and manœuvre ground for the South Island had to be abandoned. This area consisted principally of rural runs leased from the Waimakariri River Board, for which it was proposed to exchange Crown-land runs of similar capacity and value. The Lands and Survey Department has, however, been unable to find suitable areas with which to effect the necessary exchanges, and the permanent provision of a training and manœuvre area in the South Island, of a size to permit extensive training and manœuvres, remains in abeyance.

The conducting of regimental camps this year eliminated the necessity for large manœuvre areas during the period, but the future training requirements of the Territorial Force, in brigade, divisional, or more extensive training, make it essential that areas of sufficient size, and situated conveniently for the concentration of the troops, should be available in each district.

To obviate field training and manœuvres being confined year after year to the same locality and provide suitable variation of country, it is most requisite that a Manœuvre Act, such as exists in England and Australia, should be provided, so that troops may be encamped on and exercised over ground most suitable for the purpose of the training, and convenient for the concentrations desired.

66. RAILWAY AND STEAMER TRANSPORT.

As this year the annual training of units was carried out in local regimental camps at dates and places within their Territorial districts most convenient to local requirements, the demands on the transport services, railway and steamer, were naturally not so heavy at any one time as during the two previous training seasons, when brigade and divisional training-camps respectively were carried out in the several military districts.

The concentration of the units of the Main Expeditionary Force at the district concentration camps, and the despatch of district quotas of the subsequent reinforcement drafts to the Trentham Camp for organization and training prior to embarkation for the seat of war, have, however, greatly increased the total demands made on the railway and ferry steamer services over previous years. The exigencies of the situation have imposed these additional transport services on the ordinary transport requirements of the community periodically throughout the year, and the manner in which all demands of the Department in this connection have been met, and special trains and services expeditiously and efficiently arranged for, cannot be too highly emphasized. The provision of the railway transport required has obviously placed much extra work on the Railway Department, and the thanks of this Department are due to the General Manager and staff, District Traffic Managers and staffs, and all Railway officers, for the excellent arrangements made and assistance rendered wherever possible.

The Railway Department has also, where possible, arranged extra trains to enable friends and relatives of the men to visit the Expeditionary Force camps, and for the troops to take advantage of leave, for which appreciation must be expressed.