

The Municipal Corporations Act enables these bodies to establish rifle ranges for local use from Corporation funds. In some instances this has been done, or assistance given in the upkeep of local ranges. No doubt in the great majority of cases the absence of a suitable site on municipal reserves or endowments, and the cost of acquiring an available area, have militated against any action in this respect; but if a good range-site is held this should either be developed by the Corporation or placed at the disposal of the local units, the members of which are, after all, citizens whose convenience is entitled, at the very least, to the same consideration as that given to sports bodies or other sections of the community. The Department will be only too glad to afford any local body expert assistance in the selection of sites and construction of ranges.

69. ARMY SERVICE CORPS.

The organization of the New Zealand Army Service Corps was commenced in January, 1914, on the arrival of the four Imperial Army Service Corps officers from England. One-seventh of the normal establishment had been posted at the June, 1913, posting, but no training took place until February, 1914. About thirty of all ranks of the corps went into each of the district camps in April and May, 1914, and performed supply duties. In June, 1914, five-sevenths of the normal establishment was posted, and the various companies were just being equipped when the war broke out.

The organization and training of the Army Service Corps has progressed very favourably. The companies are established as under:—

Auckland District: No. 1 Company (Headquarters), Auckland; No. 2 Company (Infantry Brigade), Auckland, Te Kuiti, Te Aroha, and Dargaville; No. 5 Company (Mounted Rifles Brigade—Independent), Auckland.

Canterbury District: No. 7 Company (Infantry Brigade), Christchurch, Nelson, Rangiora, Timaru; No. 9 Company (Mounted Rifles Brigade), Christchurch.

Otago District: No. 6 Company (Headquarters), Invercargill; No. 8 Company (Infantry Brigade), Dunedin; No. 10 Company (Mounted Rifles Brigade—Independent), Dunedin.

Wellington District: No. 3 Company (Infantry Brigade), Wellington; No. 4 Company (Mounted Rifles Brigade), Palmerston North, Napier, Masterton, and Hawera.

The four Imperial Army Service Corps officers and four warrant officers on the outbreak of war had unfortunately to relinquish their positions as Assistant Directors of Supplies and Transport and Instructors respectively to each Military District, three officers proceeding with the Expeditionary Force, and the fourth was posted to Headquarters as Inspector of Army Service Corps. Two warrant officers proceeded with the Expeditionary Force.

The majority of these companies are now nearly up to establishment, as a quota of four-sevenths of normal establishment was posted at the end of May, 1914, and one-seventh at the usual June posting. The shortage is mostly in the artificers, principally caused by the great demand for these specialists in the Expeditionary Force and reinforcements.

In the Otago and Auckland camps Army Service Corps companies or sections of companies accompanied units to camp and performed the supply and transport duties necessary. This system worked well and caused a saving in expenditure.

The Army Service Corps personnel have worked well, and this branch of the service has become very popular.

70. SUPPLIES AT TRAINING-CAMPS.

The supplies for the regimental camps were obtained by contract, those in the Auckland and Otago Districts by the Assistant Directors of Supplies and Transport, and the issue and accounting was done by the Army Service Corps. In the Wellington and Canterbury Districts supplies were obtained by contract and special purchase where unavoidable under regimental arrangements. Both ways worked well, but the former was found to be the more economical. The number of tenders received was up to the average, the contracts were well carried out, and the quality of the supplies was good.

71. CANTEENS.

The dry canteens in camp were arranged regimentally. No complaints were received.

72. RATIONS AND FORAGE.

As camps were held regimentally this year, and the Army Service Corps Permanent Staff being greatly diminished, districts were given the option of rationing units by means of utilizing the Army Service Corps companies as supply detachments, or by drawing the allowance (2s. per man per diem) and allowing the regiment to make their own arrangements as regards the provision of rations.

The scale of rations was the same as last year, with the exception that those units that were rationed by the Army Service Corps were not granted the 2d. per man per diem for extras. The ration was suitable, with the exception that it was found necessary to purchase green vegetables and dried fruits, &c., on account of the 2d. per diem having been discontinued. In no case did the extras purchased exceed 2d. per man per diem.

Experience has proved that the best system of rationing Territorial troops in this Dominion is by a ration similar to that issued in the 1914 annual camps, supplemented by a messing-allowance of 2d. per man per diem.