

57. TRAINING OF ENGINEERS' REINFORCEMENTS AT CAMPS.

Complete sets of mining tools and materials, boring and blasting tools, demolition stores, entrenching implements, pontoons and bridging material have been issued to camp for training of field companies and field-troop reinforcements.

Cable-wagon and equipment for laying field telegraph-cable, also field telephones and equipment, have been issued to camps for training of Engineer Signal units.

58. ARTILLERY.

The batteries in the Dominion have been equipped with B.L. 15-pr. guns as a temporary issue for training.

Much work has been done by Ordnance Store Corps in re-forming, annealing, &c., the very large quantity of fixed brass cartridge-cases in stock, and when supplies of cordite, shells, fuzes, &c., are available a large quantity of field-gun ammunition can be rapidly made up.

Economy has had to be exercised in the issue of Garrison Artillery practice ammunition.

The Artillery accounts show an improvement on last year.

59. STORE BUILDINGS.

As mentioned in my last annual report, the congestion in the Store buildings at Wellington was causing great inconvenience, but I am pleased to report that the Hon. the Minister in Charge of Munitions and Supplies, after a personal inspection, immediately ordered the erection of a new building. This met our requirements for the time being, but the large orders for stores placed by the Munitions Board again congested the stores to such an extent that another building, 100 ft. long by 40 ft. wide, and of two stories, is now being erected. I think this will meet our requirements, but should necessity arise there is sufficient land available to erect another building of similar dimensions.

This building expenditure is not wasted, as even after the war is over the buildings, if not required for store purposes, can at little expense be converted into offices for Base Records and Pay Department, both of which branches are now paying rentals in the city, and the office-work could thereby be brought nearer Headquarters.

60. MEDICAL STORES.

These are now under the control of the Director-General of Medical Services, with a qualified warrant officer to supervise the supplies and issue same. This is as it should be, as hitherto there was no qualified man on the Ordnance Store staff for this duty.

A new ambulance-wagon was recently imported from England to be used as a model for manufacture in the Dominion of other wagons required for training our Territorials.

Our supply of field medical chests, surgical haversacks, and field stretchers obtained last year was sufficient to train units in camps.

61. VETERINARY STORES AND HORSE EQUIPMENT, SADDLERY, ETC.

The supply has been ample for requirements.

62. SHEETS, GROUND, WATERPROOF.

As mentioned in my last report, there is difficulty in maintaining supplies of waterproof sheets, as every man leaving the Dominion takes one with him as part of his equipment. Orders for 20,000 sheets have been placed in England and Australia, with promise of early delivery. A new waterproof-canvas sheet was recently tested in the training-camps and gave good results, but unfortunately the supply of material at present in the Dominion is only sufficient to make 1,500 sheets.

63. CAMP-KETTLES AND MESS-TINS.

A good stock of these is on hand, or on order from manufacturers in the Dominion. Owing to the increased price of tin the cost of the manufactured articles has increased.

64. DRILL-BOOKS.

The supply of drill-books and other technical military publications obtainable only from England is very limited, and the greatest care is being exercised in the issue of our supply on hand.

A revised edition of the "New Zealand Manual of Military Law" was printed and issued during the year.

There has been a great demand on the Government Printer for forms, printing, &c., and owing to the shortage of printing-paper all users of forms, &c., were asked to exercise strict economy.

65. ORGANIZATION, EQUIPMENT, AND ORDNANCE STORES.

Further reorganization has taken place in what has in the past been generally known as the Defence Stores, bringing the duties into line with military requirements.

In future the Defence Storekeeper will assume the military designation of "Director of Equipment and Ordnance Stores," the District Storekeepers being designated "Assistant Directors."

In this section of the Q.M.S. branch a certain amount of dual control still necessarily exists. I am, however, glad to acknowledge the assistance given me by the Public Service Commissioners in this respect during the past year. As experienced and returned officers and non-commissioned officers become available this section will in time be staffed by a military personnel, and assume its true relation to the military Forces of the Dominion.