

aside for twenty-four hours' drying. After this period the uppers are thoroughly treated with dubbin, which not only penetrates the pores of the leather (thus rendering them watertight), but also has a mellowing effect upon the uppers, making them equal in pliability to those of new boots. The boots are then taken off the followers and placed in storage-bins ready for use. After this treatment the boots are in excellent condition both from a serviceable and sanitary point of view. There are at present 4,600 pairs of boots treated in this manner, and these figures will be added to (approximately) at the rate of forty pairs daily until the present stock of boots in store for repairs (estimated, after allowing for rejections, at 4,000 pairs) is exhausted.

During the past year two crippled returned soldiers were trained in boot-repairing, and are now making a success in civil life. Three more men have been sent up by the Repatriation Department, and it is hoped they will take a keen interest in the work and thus re-establish themselves in civil life. There is room for four more men, but as yet the Repatriation Department has not been able to supply same.

MISCELLANEOUS STORES.

Our supplies of miscellaneous stores have been reduced to a minimum consistent with estimated requirements, and, generally speaking, we are in a safe position.

All tentage is at the disposal of the Public Health Department, but it is anticipated that it will shortly be released.

CLOTHING.

The deliveries of all garments during this period have been most satisfactory. The complaints have been practically nil, and great credit is due to the various manufacturers for the good work that was delivered.

The patterns for greatcoats and jackets, S.D., supplied to the contractors, so that uniformity in fit could be obtained, were all that could be desired, and materially helped to produce the smart effect that was noticeable in the uniforms.

The condition of stock in the Department is good, and no sign of moth is visible.

The hospital clothing and linen issued to the various hospitals has been of a very good quality.

The practice of obtaining supplies of linen, shirting, pillow-cotton, and Turkey twill towels from manufacturers at Home has enabled the Department to supply a good hard-wearing article, and saved the Department a great deal in cost as against local purchase. In one item, sheeting, the Department is saved at least 2s. per yard.

During the period it was found necessary to cancel part supplies of grey blankets, 11/4 size, and substitute white blankets, 10/4, for hospital purposes. This has been the means of enabling the Department to issue a blanket for hospital that is second to none. This blanket has three red lines down the centre to enable it to be identified as Government property.

The installation of the power plant in the Sailmakers' Section has been of great use to the Department, and during this period a vast quantity of goods has been made up, such as sheets, slips (pillow), neckerchiefs, cloths (table), &c.

During this period, as a result of the cessation of hostilities, the Department's stock of belts (cholera) totalled 19,850, which at first appeared to be dead stock, but these have been put to good use in the manufacture of shirts (flannel, hospital) and drawers (flannel). The cost of this work is 2s. 6d. per garment, which includes the unpicking of the belts—no easy task. This innovation has proved a success, and has enabled the Department to put to good use articles which were considered as useless. Three belts are required to make each flannel shirt, and two belts are required to make each pair flannel drawers. New flannel shirts cost 10s. 6d. each, and drawers 8s. 6d. each.

Mattress-protectors: It was considered advisable to take steps to protect the kapok mattresses from damage owing to the wires on beds rusting from perspiration, and to this end some 1,500 blankets made from cotton, and which were not considered suitable for issue, were converted into mattress-protectors by the Sailmakers' Section.

Hats (felt), renovation of: This article has been put to good use, the cost of renovation being 3s., which includes new leather chin-straps, also restocking and cleaning of hood, which work has been most satisfactorily performed. To date some 1,500 hats have been subjected to renovation, thus enabling the Department to reissue hats which in the past were not considered suitable.

RENOVATION OF GARMENTS.

The work of renovation of garments has again been a complete success during the year. This scheme has been the means of putting to good use articles which formerly would not have been used again.

All garments are thoroughly disinfected when being laundered, and all fear of contagion is done away with.

For the purpose of pocketing, a good quantity of condemned denims were disposed of to the contractor at a price satisfactory to the Department—viz., £302 3s. 6d. If disposed of as produce this material would have only realized £54 12s. 4d., thus showing a credit to the Department of £247 11s. 2d.

Greatcoats: This article, which is thoroughly washed, disinfected, renovated, and made practically a new garment for the sum of 6s., is a great saving to the Department, bearing in mind that new coats cost £2 10s. It will be seen that a saving of £2 4s. is effected.

Jackets, S.D.: This garment is thoroughly examined; new sleeves, pockets, stays, collar, and linings are put in, thereby making a first-class job and enabling the Department to issue a garment equivalent to new at a cost of 7s. 6d., as against £1 10s., the cost of the new article, the saving involved being £1 2s. 6d. each garment.