

(c) Aircraft and Equipment.

The total number of serviceable aircraft held on charge or shortly due to arrive at Wigram Aerodrome is sixteen machines of various types, one D.H. 50 being a civil type imported for photographic survey work. Of the fifteen service-type aircraft, five machines formed part of the Imperial gift of aeroplanes in 1919, and, as I pointed out in my last year's report, they are obsolete, and therefore difficult and expensive to maintain. It is estimated that with care they can be kept airworthy on present supplies for another twelve months.

To all intents our air fleet now consists of five Avros (*ab initio* training aircraft), and five Bristol fighters (Army co-operation aircraft), indicating a retrograde movement as far as the number of available aircraft is concerned.

In order to equip the composite squadrons to be formed at Wigram Aerodrome and Hobsonville it is essential that a definite programme of annual purchase should be laid down and adhered to, and an increased expenditure on the Air Services will be required. A suggested scheme of progressive purchase of service and training aircraft has been prepared. As this programme is spread over a considerable period, it is not possible to definitely state the annual expenditure involved, but it is under £35,000 until the years 1930-32, when the purchase of flying-boats brings the expenditure up to £50,000 for those two years.

(d) Air Base, Auckland.

Several alternative schemes and plans of the layout of Hobsonville Combined Land-plane and Sea-plane Station have now been received from the Air Ministry for consideration, and it is proposed to ask for funds to proceed with development work when a decision has been arrived at.

(e) Personnel.

The time has now arrived when it is of vital necessity that *ab initio* training of pilots and technical training of mechanics be undertaken to provide an efficient Territorial Air Force. It is proposed to enlist up to a maximum of ten Cadets for training as pilots, and to enrol approximately twenty mechanics from trades allied to various Air Force duties. The Cadet pilots will, if possible, be drawn from engineering students at universities, and be given three months' continuous training in flying and service duties, whilst the mechanics will be given training comparable in duration to that of the Territorial Land Forces.

4. TERRITORIAL FORCE.

The present strength of the Territorial Force is shown in Appendix I. This shows an increase of 1,619 over last year. The obligatory training for the year was the same as the previous year, with special courses of instruction for all officers, warrant officers, and non-commissioned officers. These courses afforded officers, warrant officers, and non-commissioned officers of our citizen forces splendid opportunities to increase their military knowledge and improve their capabilities as leaders and trainers of their men.

The Territorial Force as a whole has made a distinct advance during the year. As a result of the careful preliminary and elementary training done during the previous two years all units have been able to carry out more advanced field-work. The result of this field-work has developed the command, control, and initiative of leaders, more particularly in the junior officers, warrant, and non-commissioned officers, besides increasing the individual interest of all ranks in their training.

During my tours of inspection in various parts of the Dominion it is also evident to me that a greater interest is being taken by the general public in the units recruited and trained in their respective localities. This reawakened interest on the part of the public in the efficiency, well-being, and good name of our Territorial units, together with the traditions handed down to them from the Great War, has been not only encouraging to the men themselves, but also a great assistance in attaining a much higher standard than has previously existed. It would now be possible successfully to undertake brigade training and combined operations, but this is not intended, as such higher training would interfere unduly with commercial and industrial life by taking all men of military age in a Command into camp at the one time.

The increase in population, and the trend of our youth to the main centres, has resulted in city units becoming well over strength and growing unwieldy: *e.g.*, the 1st Battalion, The Auckland Regiment, is five hundred over strength. The sound way of keeping the strength of units within establishments is the forming of new units. This I cannot recommend owing to the increased cost, the money being required in other avenues. To overcome the difficulty my Director of Medical Services has drawn up a higher physical standard for the Territorial Force, and I am hoping that this will keep city units within their required establishments and also result in higher efficiency in units.

A very satisfactory feature of the past training-year has been the large increase in the number of horses seen in the camps of our Mounted Rifle regiments. Though the development of the Air Service will greatly assist the field forces in general reconnaissance duties, in the absence of mechanized equipment we are still dependent on the mounted arm for close reconnaissance and protective duties.

During the year a new department, the N.Z. Army Legal Department, has been established. It will consist of Legal Staff Officers, who will be attached to General Headquarters, headquarters of Commands, and lower formations as required. The duties of these officers will be to advise and instruct upon questions of military law, to advise on and frame charges, to examine and advise upon proceedings of trials by court-martial, to act as Judge-Advocate, president, member, or prosecutor at courts-martial, and to act as president or member of courts of inquiry.

Battle honours have now been approved for all Infantry and Mounted Rifle regiments in accordance with our recommendations on the subject to the Army Council. The question as to whether our Mounted Rifle regiments should carry standards has been referred to the Army Council for decision. Up to the present they have not enjoyed this privilege.