

NEW SOUTH WALES.

PREFATORY.

IT has not been considered desirable to detail the preliminary training in the case of each Contingent or draft. It may readily be understood, however, that it would have been impossible to clothe, equip, drill, and despatch 6,000 men and horses to the seat of the war, readily and steadily, without perfect system and regularity of method. The first Contingents embarked were in reality drafts from the three New South Wales mounted regiments; the company of infantry was enrolled entirely from selected men of the Militia and Volunteer Battalions. These were, therefore, a superior class of individuals, from whom considerable was to be expected; and there was little trouble in getting them away. "A" Battery R.A.A. was, of course, under strict discipline; and the same may be said of the Army Medical Corps.

But much rougher material had to be dealt with in the Bushmen's and subsequent Contingents; though, of course, they ultimately became leavened with a proportion of men who had been to the war and gained valuable experience. Many of the recruits, however—a large majority in some cases—were mere rough bushmen, countrymen, handicraftsmen, farm labourers, and the like, who had never soldiered before, and had everything to learn in the way of drill and discipline.

Camps of Instruction were established at Randwick and elsewhere; and the men, having been accepted, passed the tests, and enrolled, were put through such a rapid and comprehensive course as should fit them for duty. Horses were selected and purchased as rapidly as possible, consistently with fair accuracy of judgment, and handed over to their riders, who were taught the routine of stable duty. They were issued with uniforms and equipment, and organized into squadrons; squadrons subdivided into troops, and troops into sections of four. The men were exercised in recruit drill, musketry, marching, and squadron work, and the duties of an irregular horseman, both mounted and dismounted. Finally, the battalion was paraded as such; and officers and sergeants tested in their work. Interior economy, as applied to the routine of camp life and the field, and discipline, also formed important subjects of instruction.

Duly qualified officers and staff-sergeants were selected for the training, and a Camp Commandant appointed for each Camp. Selected officers were likewise detailed to make the necessary arrangements for embarkation of men and horses in the transports available in each case; so that when the day arrived, all things being in readiness, there might not be any hitch.

By these means, and a severe course of what might be termed "forcing," the various Contingents were enabled to make quite a creditable appearance when they marched to the quay for embarkation; usually in the presence of thousands of interested and enthusiastic spectators. Great encomium was due to the Head-Quarter Staff, both the A.A.G. and A.Q.M.G. Departments, and to the Pay Department, under Mr. J. B. Laing, upon which an unusually severe strain was placed. Also to the officers and sergeants instructors for the unanimity and energy with which they worked to bring about so desirable a consummation.

No horses were brought back from South Africa; they were handed over to Remount Depôts prior to embarkation of each Contingent for Australia.

In addition to the articles of uniform noted as issued to Contingents, each man was supplied with boots and a full and complete kit, comprising clothing, underwear, necessaries, &c.