

of the railways, except that the running of trains after dark had to be suspended. During the same period fully 60 per cent. of damaged bridges and culverts were permanently or semi-permanently repaired.

#### Transport.

It having been found that the allotment of transport to units in accordance with the "War Establishments, 1898," was not suitable for a large force, I, on my arrival in South Africa in January, 1900, decided that the transport service must be reorganised.

The result of this re-organisation, under Major-General Sir William Nicholson, has been most successful, and has fully justified my expectations. I append a detailed report on the subject.

#### Army Service Corps.

To do justice to the excellent work done by the Army Service Corps during the war, and to give lengthy details of the magnitude of the task assigned to this department are beyond the limits of a paragraph in a Despatch. It is, however, estimated that since the war began, and up to the 30th October, 1900, the approximate number of rations issued to the army operating from the Cape Colony, north of the Orange River has been:—

	Number of Rations.	Approximate Tonnage.
Soldiers and natives	45,000,000	90,000
Animals .. ..	20,000,000	100,000

The strength has been approximately:—

	Number.	Required Daily.
Soldiers and natives	179,000	358 tons
Animals .. ..	93,000	465 "

It must be remembered that in the early days of the occupation of Bloemfontein, the average number of trains which could be sent from the south over the single line of railway was 7.5 daily; and that this line of railway conveyed not only supplies, but also stores, equipment, ammunition, remounts, troops, &c. Again the supply of the army after leaving Bloemfontein was a matter of very grave anxiety, and it was only by the devotion and zeal of the Army Service Corps Officers that the supplies were brought from the railhead to the troops in sufficient time to supply their daily wants. As an instance of the difficulties alluded to, a halt at Smaldeel was made imperative to allow the railway to bring the supplies sufficiently near to enable the transport to convey them to the troops. Another instance was the march from Taabosch to Johannesburg, when, as the railway had not been sufficiently repaired to admit of the required amount of supplies being brought to the front, we had to depend on such supplies as could be locally obtained. Though after the occupation of Pretoria the supply question never became acute, and later on the opening of the Natal and Delagoa Bay Railways increased our available sources, yet the difficulties to be overcome have been many; not the least

of them being the fact that to meet all our requirements and until the rolling stock at Barberton and Komati Poort was captured we were dependent upon 95 old engines to work the whole of the Orange River Colony and Transvaal railway systems, whilst in peace time the late Republics found that 250 engines were necessary for their daily use. In the above I have only referred to the work done in supplying the troops based on the Cape Colony. The Natal army has reason also to be entirely satisfied with the manner in which it has been supplied, and the occasions have been rare when any portion of this army have had anything but full rations. These services reflect the greatest credit on Colonel W. Richardson, C.B., and Colonel E. W. D. Ward, C.B., Directors of Supplies, and the Army Service Corps serving under them.

#### Army Telegraphs.

The duties performed by the Army Telegraphs under Lieut.-Colonel R. Hippiusley, R.E., throughout the war have my entire approbation. No portion of the army has had more work or greater responsibility than this branch. With a personnel of 25 officers and 1,221 operators, linesmen, &c. (of whom 4 officers and 153 N.C.O.'s and men have died or been invalided), nearly 2½ millions of messages have been dealt with during the past thirteen months, some of them containing as many as 4,000 words. The telegraph systems taken over, repaired, and maintained exceed 3,300 miles in length, with over 9,000 miles of wire. In addition, 959 miles of air line have been erected and 1,145 miles of cable laid. Great credit is also due for the quick way repairs to the lines, so frequently interrupted by the Boers, have been carried out. This is a most dangerous service, as there is always a chance that the enemy may be lying in wait near the break, but there has been throughout the most unhesitating promptitude in its performance. The young officers in charge of cable carts have also often had perilous work to perform when winding back their wire, alone or with a very small escort.

#### Submarine Telegraphs.

The working of the Submarine Telegraphs was most satisfactory, and the liberality of the companies in giving special rates for soldiers was much appreciated by the Army.

#### Military Postal Service.

The magnitude of the task set the Military Postal Service may be appreciated when it is realised that the army mails from England have exceeded in bulk the whole of the mails arriving for the inhabitants of Cape Colony and Natal, and contained each week little short of 750,000 letters, newspapers, and parcels for the troops. No little credit is therefore due to the department under Major Treble in the first few months, and for the greater part of the time under Lieut.-Colonel J. Greer, Director of Military Postal Services, for the way in which it has endeavoured to cope with the vast quantity of correspondence, bearing in mind the incessant manner in which the troops have been moved about the country, the transport difficulties which had to be encountered, the want of postal experience in the bulk of the personnel of the corps, and the inadequacy of the establishments laid down for the several organisations.

#### Royal Army Medical Corps.

Under Surgeon-General Wilson this depart-