

tween 400,000 and 500,000 persons have been brought under instruction, while the number of attendances at lectures has approached a million in the course of a month.

Our New Armies.

(23) The feature of the war which to the historian may well appear the most noteworthy is the creation of our new Armies.

To have built up successfully in the very midst of war a great new Army on a more than Continental scale, capable of beating the best troops of the strongest military nation of pre-war days, is an achievement of which the whole Empire may be proud. The total of over 327,000 German prisoners captured by us on the Western front is in striking contrast to the force of six divisions, comprising some 80,000 fighting men all told, with which we entered the war. That we should have been able to accomplish this stupendous task is due partly to the loyalty and devotion of our Allies and to the splendid work of the Royal Navy, but mainly to the wonderful spirit of the British race in all parts of the world.

Discipline has never had such a vindication in any war as in the present one, and it is their discipline which most distinguishes our new Armies from all similarly created armies of the past. At the outset the lack of deep-seated and instinctive discipline placed our new troops at a disadvantage compared with the methodically trained enemy. This disadvantage, however, was overcome, and during the last two years the discipline of all ranks of our new Armies, from whatever part of the Empire they have come, was excellent. Born from a widespread and intelligent appreciation of the magnitude of the issues at stake and a firm belief in the justice of our cause, it drew strength and permanence from a common-sense recognition of what discipline really means—from a general realisation that true discipline demands as much from officers as from men, and that without mutual trust, understanding and confidence on the part of all ranks the highest form of discipline is impossible.

Drawn from every sphere of life, from every profession, department and industry of the British Empire, and thrust suddenly into a totally new situation full of unknown difficulties all ranks have devoted their lives and energies to the service of their country in the whole-hearted manner which the magnitude of the issues warranted. The policy of putting complete trust in subordinate commanders and of allowing them a free hand in the choice of means to attain their object has proved most successful. Young officers, whatever their previous education may have been, have learnt their duties with enthusiasm and speed, and have accepted their responsibilities unflinchingly.

Our universities and public schools throughout the Empire have proved once more, as they have proved time and again in the past, that in the formation of character, which is the root of discipline, they have no rivals. Not that universities and public schools enjoy a monopoly of the qualities which make good officers. The life of the British Empire generally has proved sound under the severest tests, and while giving men whom it is an honour for any officer to command, has furnished officers of the highest standard from all ranks of society and all quarters of the world.

Promotion has been entirely by merit, and the highest appointments were open to the humblest, provided he had the necessary qualifications of character, skill and knowledge. Many instances could be quoted of men who from civil or comparatively humble occupations have risen to important commands. A schoolmaster, a lawyer, a taxicab driver, and an ex-Serjeant-Major have commanded brigades; one editor has commanded a division, and another held successfully the position of Senior Staff Officer to a Regular division; the under-cook of a Cambridge College, a clerk to the Metropolitan Water Board, an insurance clerk, an architect's assistant, and a police inspector became efficient General Staff Officers; a Mess Serjeant, a railway signalman, a coal miner, a market gardener, an assistant secretary to a haberdasher's company, a Quartermaster-Serjeant, and many private soldiers have risen to command battalions; clerks have commanded batteries; a schoolmaster, a collier, the son of a blacksmith, an iron moulder, an instructor in tailoring, an assistant gas engineer, a grocer's assistant, as well as policemen, clerks and privates, have commanded companies or acted as adjutants.

As a body, and with few exceptions, new officers have understood that the care of their men must be their first consideration, that their men's comforts and well-being should at all times come before their own, that without this they cannot expect to win the affection, confidence, loyalty, and obedience of those they are privileged to command, or to draw the best from them. Moreover, they have known how to profit by the experience of others, and in common with their men they have turned willingly to the members of the old Regular Army for instruction and guidance in all branches of their new way of life.

On their part, officers, non-commissioned officers, and men of the old Regular Army have risen to the demands made upon them in a manner equally marvellous. Their leaven has pervaded the whole of the mighty force which in 4½ years of war has gathered from all parts of the world round the small highly trained Army with which we entered the war. The general absence of jealousy and the readiness to learn, which in the Field has markedly characterised all ranks of our new Armies, is proof both of the quality of our old Army and of the soundness of our pre-war training. If further proof were needed, it is found in the wonderful conduct and achievements of our Armies new and old, and in the general pride with which they are universally regarded.

In the earlier stages of the war the Regular Army was called on to provide instructors and cadres round which the new Armies could be formed. All that was best in the old Regular Army, its discipline, based on force of character, leadership and mutual respect, its traditions, and the spirit that never knows defeat, have been the foundations on which the new Armies have been built up. Heavy demands were necessarily made upon our establishment of trained regular officers, most regrettably depleted by the heavy sacrifices of the early days of the war. The way in which such demands have been met by those who survived those days have justified our belief in them.

Neither have the officers of the new Armies, whether drawn from the British Isles or the Dominions, risen with less spirit and success to the needs of the occasion. The great ex-