

The honourableness of these ignoramuses I have never impugned. On an occasion when one of the "very best" was offered a fiver out of a deal, he promptly "booted" his would-be benefactor out of the place.

One of these gentlemen said to the writer, "I am not paid to haggle over the prices, I only am ordered to buy, and at a limited price; I am not used to haggling over anything when buying it for myself, and I am certainly not going to do it here." It was indeed no joke buying horses in South Africa, for some of the sellers were very rough to deal with, and most insulting.

The writer has never come across one of the "very best" whom he would trust to lay out a "fiver" of his money on horseflesh. Many of the Remount Officers are infantry men, and seem to take a pride in admitting that they know little or nothing about horses; yet most of these will not permit anyone, who does know, and is anxious to help them, to make any suggestions; or if they do permit it, which they do in some instances, they afterwards calmly ignore the advice tendered them, and the man who makes many suggestions or is in the habit of complaining of the want of this, that or the other for the benefit of the animals, is generally shifted at the first opportunity, or perhaps "Stellenbosched" for good.

At one depot—of which the writer has heard—the buying spirit was so strongly developed in the O.C. that, in cases of emergency, the horses were bought

after dark, the animals being examined by candle light in the open. Judging by the specimens the writer saw of this peculiar method of purchasing, he should say that probably the animal under examination had "doused the glim" either by kicking it out, or falling on to it through fear of being rejected. Otherwise the buyer and the V.S. must have been deaf, dumb and blind.

The best judge and buyer, in the writer's opinion, among the O.C.'s in South Africa, is one of the "best" only—not one of the "very best." It is his misfortune to be practically a Colonial, for he has had many years' experience in Australia, and some years experience in South Africa. He has a thorough knowledge of the latter country; he knows the sellers as well as they know themselves, and he is not always desirous of keeping this knowledge to himself when buying. This one of the "best" was a very keen buyer although he frequently rejected a large number of horses as being unsuitable or unsound. Well, these used to go to one of the "very best" to buy, the nearest depot being tried first, and so on from one depot to another until they were sold, although this meant taking them in some instances hundreds of miles.

To return to the incompetent buyer, the writer has known a lot rejected by the O.C. on the ground of the price exceeding the value to be actually sold the very next day at an even higher price than they were offered to him at to a private buyer. This incident clearly

proves that the Government buyer did not know the actual market value of the animal he was buying. There is no doubt that the buying generally has been done badly in South Africa, but perhaps no worse than it has been done in England and elsewhere. The buying of one horse in England badly means a far greater loss to the British ratepayer than, say, three or four similar bad bargains in South Africa.

There was one depot, the O.C. of which (one of the "very very best") was very well meaning, but he was an infantry man and his second was also, to coin a phrase, severely infantry. The latter was under the impression that he had nothing more to learn about horses and mules, especially perhaps about mules. I think someone must have discovered his value as a remount officer, as he was "Stellenbosched" shortly after an official inspection at the depot.

The A.I.R. for South Africa was, and probably is, called upon to do more than lies within the power of any one man to do satisfactorily. He could not personally supervise all the buying, although he had daily statements sent him, followed by weekly and monthly reports, and you might be sure that it was little that used to escape his eye. The writer knows that the A.I.R. had not a Remount Officer who would not have done his level best for his Chief, but in most cases that "best" was of little or no assistance, and often had been better left undone. But notwithstanding all the care and supervision that was exercised over

the purchasing officers, there was undoubtedly an immense leakage of money in this department of the service. The officers in the remounts in South Africa received an insufficient allowance for expenses; the amount allowed daily (*viz.*, 20s., inclusive, which certain contingent stoppages reduce to 15s.) is absurdly below the mark.

A private buyer who knew the country well, told the writer that it cost him on an average quite £3 a day. So how is the Imperial Officer to do it on 20s. or less? The allowance should be, when on the road, at least 40s. per day. The whole of the travelling allowances for officers in South Africa should have been altered long ago. At present a Lieutenant and Captain are allowed 12s. 6d. per day for eight days, and 7s. 6d. afterwards. The 12s. 6d. would not pay for board and lodging at a respectable hotel, so where does the 7s. 6d. come in? The Remount Officer should be better paid than he is, and his purchasing allowance should be increased. It is real hard work to try to buy well, and the buyer should not be asked to pay any business expenses out of his own pocket. It is a bad system, and in ordinary commercial life would not be tolerated for one moment. There has always been a certain amount of grumbling about this tax upon the private means of remount buyers. As far as the writer's experience goes, any man who is absolutely honest, and does his best under all circumstances, is bound to come out of the service poorer than when he entered it.

A little red tape is necessary, but it is absolutely fatal to remount work under emergency. It is a great pity, but there has always existed a sort of jealousy between Imperial and Colonial officers; though as the writer, owing to his having resided both in Australia and England, was looked upon by each side as belonging to his particular party, he personally has experienced but little (in comparison) of this. Still he remembers that one of the "very best" once said to him, "All Colonial officers are liars—can't believe a word they say," a remark of excessive warmth, which made the listener feel a little warm himself, and which shall here serve as an illustration of the regrettable relations between officers under the same flag.

Colonials are no fools at horse dealing; they are just as honest and straight as anyone else, and they would have made as a rule infinitely better buyers than those who have done the bulk of the buying. Colonials are inspired by an irrepressible "diamond cut diamond" feeling when buying horses, and a Colonial buyer would have taken keen pride in making better purchases at a lower average price than other officers. A word of praise would have fully repaid him for his deals and have been a strong incentive to him to excel his previous achievements by his future ones.

Regarding buying in England, the writer has not been able to learn much, but in a chat with one who has sold a good many horses to the Government, he learned that his informant had sold horses at a profit

on the original cost price, though they had worked for him for five and six years in harness. What is the use of sending this sort to South Africa for cavalry purposes?

On another occasion, he was informed that a horse was purchased at Watford for 50s., and within a few hours after it had been "faked" up, it was sold for about £35 to one of "the very best" for a remount.

The class of horse purchased in this country has been universally condemned by those who do know something about a horse suitable for remount work. One seller in England told me that he had carefully selected a number of horses to submit—really first class and suitable horses—and that his foreman suggested putting in some that were not suitable from any standpoint whatever, so as to enhance the value of the good ones, never thinking for one moment that any of these would be accepted. But the inferior horses were nearly all selected, and many of the very best horses shown, actually horses that it did not pay the seller to sell at the price offered, were rejected. When he good-naturedly asked for what reason a certain horse (which he valued at £100) had been rejected, he was snubbed and told that "the horse was not suitable."

Of course this arrangement suited the seller and he did not grumble at it at all, but his desire was to supply a good horse at a decent price, and in his heart he did not desire to deceive, or even to sell an unsuitable animal.

The writer, when in South Africa and entraining remounts for the front, often wondered what the rider would say to the animal given him, and the "moke" must have been the innocent cause of many swear words. Most of the soldiers at the front could understand a "rough 'un" if he had a bit of quality about him, and would soon get him quiet and handy, but the rats and weeds sent to the front to carry men were simply so many premiums offered for men's lives.

At one time the buyer only looked for a week or two's service in the front out of the purchase. The writer has heard it said, "Oh, he will do a week's work." Strong two-year-olds were very frequently bought for fives; then the other extreme was gone to—old, old ones were purchased for six and seven years. Also a good many "bishoped" ones were purchased, i.e., horses that had had false marks made in their teeth. Boers can manipulate teeth as well as Londoners.

Not one of those offered were to the writer's knowledge rejected on account of this swindle, but the false marks had been made so clumsily that the "infant" Colonial horse dealer would have detected them, though the C.V.S. failed to do so.

The plain truth is that remount buying in South Africa, with perhaps a very few exceptions, one notably the semi-Colonial O.C. already referred to, was entrusted to the wrong men. Civil experts should have been employed in the first instance, under the

supervision of an executive officer and an A.V.D. officer, or the buying should have been done by contract under the best supervision, both civil and military. In other departments the civilian has shewn up well, and without the high-class civilian help employed by the Government the remounts in South Africa could never have been organised at all; yet this help has been very much looked down upon and very little encouragement given in most cases.

The writer has stated at the beginning of this chapter his belief in the integrity of the typical Imperial officer. He has shown that the leakage of public money in buying remounts is largely due to mere incompetence, but disagreeable as it is to say it, he must express his opinion that "bribery" and "bunce" has crept in and are partial causes of that leakage. One has heard such rumours as "So-and-so is making a good thing," "So-and-so has made a good thing," etc., and immense amounts quoted. Little things have cropped up from time to time that give colour to these statements. Smoke betokens fire.

CHAPTER IV.

THE TREATMENT OF CAPTURED AND DERELICT HORSE STOCK.

IN most cases the horse stock captured from the Boers and taken off farms, etc., was, when it arrived at the depots in Cape Colony (perhaps hundreds of miles away from where it was captured), in a most deplorable condition. As a rule this stock was driven to Bloemfontein by road, thence to its destination by train, and the spectacle it finally afforded was often most appalling, each animal being in an awfully bad and weak state, emaciated beyond the imagination of anyone who had not seen it.

On the truck doors of the railway wagon being opened, on most occasions, some were found lying down dead, others dying, the remainder just having enough strength to stand up. It was like emptying a "Noah's Ark Ambulance" to empty one of the double trucks on the South African Railway, which are constructed to take 25 head conveniently.

These emaciated animals were fairly stuffed in (perhaps 33 or more were packed in like sardines in a box), so it was just a case of the survival of the fittest, which on this occasion happened to be the "fattest," as

the thinnest naturally fell, thus reducing their chances. For all to have stood at the same time would have been utterly impossible, at all events during a railway journey of such length as that to which they were subjected.

The poor wretched starved foals! it was painful to see them; in one case the dam would be dead, in another as starved and weak as its offspring.

The various O.C.'s often telegraphed to the forwarders requesting them to put fewer animals into the trucks, so as to give the poor things a chance for life. On one occasion the writer took 26 dead out of one train; this was no unusual sight. True, war is cruel, and war will ever be cruel, but let the cruelty be confined as much as possible to the combatants and not be visited on the helpless stock. It would have been better policy and far cheaper and more humane to have shot hundreds of beasts on the spot where they were captured than to have provided a train for them to die in, or to land them at the depots in the winter without any shelter from the extremely cold nights. What chance of resuscitation—resurrection would be the better word—they had none on arriving at the so-called "convalescent farms" after such hardships. In the writer's opinion the captured stock suffered unnecessarily and most cruelly for the want of organization and someone knowing what to do for the best, and the cheapest way of doing it.

A good proportion of the O.R.C. stock was tip-top,

and in good condition, fat and sleek, when captured. But "red tape" stepped in most fatally. This stock, which was a valuable irreplaceable asset, worth many thousands of pounds, was crowded upon small farms, sometimes rented considerably above their value. The grass thereon being thus soon exhausted, the stock rapidly fell away in condition, in many cases becoming utterly worthless. No care had been taken by the veterinary department to inspect the animals for diseases; in fact, had the order been given for them to undergo a veterinary examination on arrival, it could not have been carried out in all instances for lack of a stock-yard with a "crush," without which it is impossible to examine an unbroken animal. If, on the other hand, the "crush" was in existence, other stock always had, as was proper, the preference over captured stock, and it was generally in use from daylight to dark. One or two of the O.C. s recommended the immediate sale of the yearlings and two-year-olds, and a lot of the stock was so sold and at what was a fair price at the time, say an average of £5 per head. In a few cases the purchasers did well, and in others their losses by death were numerous. The writer believes that one large lot that went away at these prices, was known by the Government seller to be suffering from a disease of a most virulent and fatal nature, the buyer being unaware of this at the time of purchasing. The greater number of these beasts died on the buyer's hands or were destroyed by him. The greatest pre-

cautions should have been taken against the wholesale distribution of badly diseased stock, since, in the long run, the evil rebounds upon the government.

As it is, the whole of South Africa is eaten up with horse and cattle disease, what with glanders, mange and horse-sickness, dik kop, blue tongue, and pneumonia, etc., for horses, rinderpest, lung-sickness, etc., for cattle, South Africa is just now a nice hot-bed for all known and unknown diseases. It is grimly comic to hear the veterinary surgeon's opinion on some of the diseases. One will say, "In my opinion it is not glanders, it is *Pupora Hemoragica*." Whatever its name, the disease was awful and most repulsive in appearance, being deadly alike to man and horse. The mange was a great scourge; there were perhaps hundreds of cases in one camp, and all as a rule caused by the captured stock being allowed to mix with the non-captured and imported stock. The two sorts of horses—imported and other army horses and captured ones and derelict stock—should never have been allowed on the same farm. Captured stock, as a matter of fact, was frequently sent straight from the Transvaal and O.R.C. to the distributing depot for remounts.

Farms should have been specially taken for the captured and derelict horses in all suitable places, where grass could have been obtained, and whence on arriving at the convalescent stage, they might have passed into the remount depots and farms, there to be fed up and re-issued.

Some home authorities might say—"Oh, a vet. should have examined the animals as they were unloaded from the train." Setting aside the fact that his duties pull him several ways and that consequently he is not always available, even if existent, it is not possible in all cases to examine horses at the moment of their discharge from the train. How, for instance, can stock be examined at night, in the pouring rain, with a wind strong enough to blow one inside out like an umbrella? How can stock be examined for any disease whatever under such circumstances? They prevent you from even seeing how many legs the animal has got, or whether he is alive or dead. You must go into the truck to find this out, and there nothing is visible but "stench." It is hardly an exaggeration to say that one can see that as well as smell it. You put your hand on the side of the prostrate animal to discover if he is really breathing or not. If you do feel him move, after nearly falling over him, or some other one, and wading up to your boot-tops in wet muck, you may come to the conclusion that he is not quite dead, but dying. So you have him pulled out by Kaffir boys, who drag him by the tail and lay him just outside the truck. On the unloading of one truck you pass to another, and the same programme is again gone through; when all are empty, you leave the derelicts lying where they are till daylight. You don't want to shoot them in the dark; so you give them a chance till morning, when

you shoot those that have absolutely no chance of life. The slain are then dragged behind two bullocks to their last resting-place, and if they could speak they would probably say, "I'm d—— glad to be here." To the survivors you give a powerful stimulant, and after a few minutes they are brought to their feet by Kaffirs, four of whom generally walk with each horse, one on each side to prop him up, one behind to push him along, the fourth in front to prevent the animal from falling on his nose. He is taken to the manger; if he eats, he will probably live; if too far gone to eat, he dies probably in a few hours, driven and starved to death by friend and foe.

Why these animals were ever sent to the Remount Depot proper, the writer always failed to understand. It was a waste of money to send 50 per cent. of them anywhere by train; by road they would have been safe from capture by anyone, as unless the capturer was in the bone trade, the prize would have been worthless to him.

The O.C.'s of depots and farms were always being cautioned, as to the amount of forage they were drawing. It did not matter what the quantity actually was, it was all the same. All was well as long as the total supply tallied with the number of horses in the depot and did not exceed the ration allowance; but there seemed always a suspicion of "Where does it go?" "Are you losing any? giving it away? selling it? or allowing it to be stolen?"

It was certainly a most difficult matter to prevent theft in some depots and farms; some of the forage was bound to go astray at times; but the average of the loss in that way seemed to be very small indeed.

Frequently orders were issued that all horse rations were to be reduced; so they were then cut down. Then another order of a similar nature would come out, then another upsetting these two and going back to "full rations." Then half rations and sometimes only quarter rations were to be given to convalescent or derelict stock, and for some time "none at all;" but this was found not to be practicable, as the order was given in winter when grass was scarce. The result of that order was that stock were soon dying at an enormous rate; on some of the outlying farms the deaths were 100 head a week. So a little food was then given them just to take them through the winter. The incident supplied another somewhat costly testimonial to "red tape," for if the entire management of the stock had been left in a practical O.C.'s hands he would not have allowed them to die of starvation. He would have fed them long before the order came directing that the stock should have 5 lbs. a day each. Outlying farms were latterly used to some extent for captured stock, but they should never have been taken on to the Remount Depots at all. They should have been sent direct to the outlying farms, and drafted back when convalescent, so as to get the better feeding at the depot and thus the more quickly get fit for active service.

The reason why the wastage has been so great with horseflesh on farms and depots and why "red tape" had to be so freely resorted to, was that the A.I.R. knew that his O.C.'s were (with only one or two exceptions) not practical men and incapable without some sort of guidance and control of carrying on their duties in anything like a satisfactory way.

Civil employees could have acted as effective agents or advisers, but in most cases they were not allowed to make even a suggestion, but simply told to execute the most ridiculous orders in connection with stock, and they had no option but to obey without a murmur, or go. Yet without the civilian help the Remount Department could never have existed or been carried on even as well as it has been.

Orders came out in the winter for all captured mares to be broken in. It would have been impossible to organise this business satisfactorily, even if, after consideration, it had been deemed advisable to break in the stock. They were not in anything like a good condition, and it was cold and bleak winter weather. The writer set his opinion against doing it. There were no shelter sheds, no yards, no breaking tackle of any kind. When the animal had been exercised or ridden, it was bound to return sweating a little and in that state would have to stand in a wind as bad as an English March wind. To attempt to break horses in under such conditions was not the way to make them the sooner fit for active service.

E

If the animals had been all right, and fed up and tied up in a particular shed, there would have been something to break. A few days' work at each animal would have sent him to the front fairly useful and in good condition. But the way insisted on frequently resulted in a cold, or pneumonia and caused vexatious delay and needless expense.

There were thousands of foals amongst the stock, and it was very distressing to see them suffering. Many were without mothers; these looked deplorable, getting worse daily until death released them from their misery. The writer suggested that they should be given away, or sold to people who would give them milk and rear them. But "red tape" slipped in again and said this was "not to be done," so they were allowed to die as hitherto.

The conditions under which the captured stock now exist have become better; but further alteration will yet be necessary if they are to do well. During the first six months of 1901, it was the custom to sell the discarded remounts as well as the captured stock that had been sent down from the front, but it was considered by many to be cruelty, to sell these animals in the emaciated condition they then were in, and ultimately the military authorities ceased to do this. The writer thinks that the cessation of this custom was chiefly due to Lieut.-General Sir F. Forestier-Walker, K.C.B., C.M.G. At all events, when it was announced that he was not to return to South Africa, the selling of these emaciated animals was again resumed.

The object of the military in the first instance was a most praiseworthy one. They wished to benefit the farmers (who were in many cases very short of horses owing to the war) by supplying them at a nominal price with animals for whose recuperation the army could not afford to wait and whose number debarred them from special attention, but which would only require kindly and attentive treatment, with good feeding, to make them soon serviceable for farm purposes.

This would have been a good object if it could have been achieved properly, i.e., if the animals could have been sold direct to the farmers. But this was seldom possible. Almost the only people who succeeded in buying these animals from the authorities were unscrupulous horse copers, who bought troops of animals at an absurdly low price per head and disposed of them afterwards at an immense profit, from £7 a head upwards. These animals were sold on the market parade at Cape Town, every Saturday. Two or three score would be brought under the hammer, and were sold for "Pounds," having been purchased for shillings.

Had they at the start been handed over at a certain price to respectable farmers (many of whom wanted to take them), with the proviso that they should be re-sold to the authorities for a stipulated sum, it would have been well, but this was never done. Why? "Red tape." Hence the loss of a valuable reserve for the remount authorities.

As a proof of the condition of these animals when sold the "Cape Times" states that—"158 of these horses were sent by rail from the Kimberley District to Capetown, having been purchased by horse cadgers. When the train arrived at Salt River, there were only 139, the rest, weak and famished, had presumably died. Of those that remained, ten were either just dead, or on the point of dying. Sixteen had to be turned into a field close by and 113 driven away. The owners grossly neglected the animals, which were in such a condition that the Railway Staff Officer at one of the stations half-way down the line took upon himself, very properly, to place food on the train and to send a military conductor in charge of them. Before sending them on he had them taken out of the trucks and watered. Ten were then dead, and many unable to stand up. The residue got through the remainder of the journey better than might have been expected, thanks to this officer's humanity. But their condition on arrival at Salt River was, as already described. These train-loads often comprise a number of foals, captured from the enemy, but not retained because of their uselessness. They share just the same treatment as that meted out to their older and sick comrades. These are things that should not be. The remedy rests with the military authorities alone."

The "Cape Times" is a Capetown paper, so the above may be considered a fair and honest report of what happens when derelict and captured stock is sold up near the front.

The management of captured and derelict stock has indeed been one of the very worst features of the remount work. As a matter of fact, as has been said before, much of it should never have been moved from where it was captured, but destroyed there and then. That course would have been less cruel than the one adopted and saved much money into the bargain. The live residue that was capable of being utilised should have been handed over to the veterinary department and put on to "sick horse farms."

However, one must confess that the unfortunate animals would not have been treated better by the Veterinary Department than by the Remount Department, for the Civil Veterinary Surgeon is about the most helpless creature in South Africa. He has no idea of organisation whatever, or of looking for a "case." He cannot be taught to do this, for he has always been used to having his "cases" brought to him. Very few of these "vets." are greatly interested in their work; some of them are often failures at everything, and some—very few—are really first class and conscientious clever men. If they have an extra large number of patients or any unforeseen epidemic breaks out, and causes a scare, the ordinary, or common and garden, C.V.S. is lost. His zeal is wanting, so he jogs along in a quiet, "don't push me, leave me alone" sort of a style.

The writer does not question the ability of those men to do their work from a scientific point of view,

but bears witness to their utter failure to meet exigencies, or to arrange their work to the best advantage of themselves and the sick animals in their charge. There were some glaring cases of this nature that came under the immediate eye of the A.I.R. who did not fail to notice them and have matters altered. But the A.I.R. has officially no control whatever over the Veterinary staff, and the writer believes that he has much regretted the fact.

On this matter the "St. James Gazette" says:—
"From the evidence we are able to obtain, it appears only too certain that reckless destruction of horses is the rule all over the field of operations. The "death-rate" among the fresh horses and curable invalids is nearly double that of those which are undergoing hard work and the risks of battle. It is, we fear, only too likely that there is truth in the reports which tell us that the one notion the Army Veterinary Department has of curing a horse is to shoot it."

On one occasion when the writer was with Col. Birkbeck at a certain Remount Depot, where everything was the pink of perfection and organization, he said—"Now we will go to the sick lines and see what that is like."

We rode over. There we discovered chaos and dirt combined with waste and utter disorganization; food thrown on the ground, oats and hay trodden into a mess unfit for pigs (let alone sick horses) to eat. Only once has the writer seen a worse "sick lines."

Confronted with this scene the A.I.R. who loves a horse (and a mule too) said, "Isn't this awful! yet I cannot do anything about it myself, only report the matter to the P.V.O." and this the writer believes the Colonel said he had already done.

But few, if any, of these animals were derelict sick. Certainly many of them had been to the front, but many of them were intended for the front, and were only in the sick lines from slight causes. Taking them as a whole however they were not by any means an emaciated lot, and were worth the best of attention.

The A.I.R. has throughout had more than he could do, but it is admitted by all that he has not only done his best but that he has done well. It was not his fault that "he had no Imperial military men with experience or technical knowledge of remount work to help him." Colonial officers and civilians of course were only to be tolerated, not trusted.

CHAPTER V.

THE EARLY AND MIDDLE DAYS OF THE REMOUNTS IN SOUTH AFRICA.

TIME, early in 1900. Simply chaos, not only with the Remount Depots, but also at the front. No one had any knowledge whatever of future requirements for a day ahead. Nearly everyone was under the impression that the war might last three months, but could certainly not last longer than six months; but when the writer said one day, that an army could not ride over the country in twelve months, and that that was what would have to be done before the Republics were conquered, he was laughed at. But when reverses took place, some of the authorities began to realise that it was to be a big business after all. And so it has turned out to be.

Orders of various and contradictory kinds were coming down daily, sometimes hourly, from the front. "Horses were to be purchased," "horses were not to be purchased"; "mules were to be purchased," "mules were not to be purchased"; and so on.

Similarly conflicting orders were issued on other matters, expenditure for buildings, etc. No one knew what were the actual immediate requirements, or what they would be in the immediate, or far future, or

whether it would be worth while doing this, or that, or putting up such and such an erection. Important details were therefore postponed from day to day, in the hope of saving a particular expense, with the result that the delay cost far more money than the amount it was desired to save.

The writer frequently suggested outlay of money for shedding and other accessories absolutely necessary for the preservation of valuable and costly equine life, but generally met with the rather scornful reply—good naturedly given—that his ideas were too expensive, that he must learn to “improvise.” This system of “improvising” has indeed been a most costly one.

The general run of Remount Officers seemed as if they could not grasp the idea that £3,000 or £4,000 judiciously and promptly laid out in absolutely necessary buildings, at the outset, would be worth a hundred times the sum in question in property-saving power. The writer used to argue the matter out, if a chance was given him. Thus, after drawing the plans and making the specification, taking out quantities and prices of the necessary material, with the cost of labour (contract), he would say, “Well, it will cost £4,000. By the time the erections are made there will probably be 2,000 or 3,000 horses on the depot and others coming in daily from the nearest port, etc., to the number of 500 to 1,000 a week; the cost per head of the animals using these buildings will therefore be

infinitesimally small. For the first 10,000 would cost only four shillings per head for their accommodation during their stay in the depot. But when, say, 40,000 or 60,000, have gone through, the cost will figure at just a few pence per head—a reduction of expense per head which will be progressive as the number of animals passing through the depot increases.”

As the writer used to say, a stall is worth five shillings to ten shillings per week in London, but in this case you have the accommodation for an indefinite period (all time, in fact) at a much less cost. Many of the English horses that arrived in the early part of the war, had cost the Government in England from £80 to £100 when they landed in South Africa. Yet they were actually put on to “Lines” in the open, when just fresh off ship. It was nothing for two or three or more of these horses to break his leg and head ropes during the night and gallop goodness knows where. Tommies were sent in the morning to find him, but, in most cases of the kind, they could not have succeeded in a month of Sundays, as horses could always be planted where nobody unused to the country could find them. Of course, horses were sometimes returned by Kaffirs, and a reward of five shillings paid. Five shillings does not go very far in South Africa, so when the small amount of the reward became known the “boys” did not trouble to bring any more back to the depot.

Not only did this system of receiving horses from

the ship and putting them on "Lines" cause wholesale and expensive losses, but the poor horses suffered greatly by exposure. Perhaps one thin blanket (under his feet probably) was the only protection he had against the inclement wet and cold nights. Not being used to the leg ropes, he at first was always endeavouring to get out of them; and his constant struggles would cut his fetlocks terribly, creating large and deep sores, most difficult to heal, or keep clean. Besides these sores, which caused lameness, there were other cuts, abrasions and bruises, caused by the animal tying himself up with the ropes, and kicking with all his might to get loose again. In doing this he would most probably kick another horse. Down they would both come; then they would start a kicking and struggling "duet," and cause other horses to fall, all kicking and struggling together. This was of nightly occurrence. There were sentries, soldiers, and Kaffir guards around the horses, but when, owing to intense darkness, nothing could be seen, of what good were these men? It was as much as a man's life was worth to approach such a struggling and kicking mass in the daytime; in the night it was out of the question. The men had lamps sometimes, the writer believes, but it is always blowing in South Africa, and candle lamps are very difficult to keep alight in a gale. The sentry could hear what was going on, but was powerless to prevent it, or assist in putting the horses straight again, until great damage had been done. A hundred

horses would be down at the same time in different parts of the lines, and, as has been shown, they remained thus till daylight before they could be released. By that time the fetlocks were absolutely raw. Yet the Remount Officer responsible in this case had no better scheme for the welfare of the valuable horses given into his charge than to "put them on lines." It has been said that the horse which broke free was generally lost. The sentry could hear the runaway scampering across the veldt, but was powerless to catch him.

At one depot these losses were a nightly occurrence, for though the O.C. was certainly one of the "very best," a gentleman in every sense of the word, he was an utter failure as a Remount Officer.

Another way of losing horses is illustrated by the following incident, which may serve besides as an example of the stubbornness and disinclination of some of the Remount Officers to be guided or assisted by advice in any way.

When the writer was in charge of a convalescent farm for imported horses only, some of which had arrived in a bad condition, while others had been through the sick lines and reached the convalescent stage, he advised that all the animals should be sent to the farm by train and not by road, although the distance from the depot was only 25 miles. The newcomers were too weak even to be led, and he well knew that it was impracticable to attempt to drive them in a mob, and advised the O.C. accordingly.

The first two lots, about 300 in number, duly arrived by train, and they did well from the very first and rapidly improved in condition. This fact was so noticeable that Col. Birkbeck (the A.I.R.) recognised this service by notifying the G.O.C. Lines of Communication of the writer's successful organisation of the farm, but soon a transformation took place. In spite of the earnest protestations made by the writer, the then Adjutant, another of the "very best" infantry officers, who invariably tried to show his authority in as offensive a manner as possible where the writer was concerned, gave instructions for the next lot to be sent by road and to be driven in a mob, he himself going in charge. Now, these horses were chiefly Americans and Hungarians—noted stampeders—just off ship, having their liberty for the first time since leaving their native soil. At 7 a.m., 200 head left the depot. Immediately they were outside the kraals, they stampeded in all directions, some towards the veldt, but the majority towards the town, galloping as hard as they could up lanes, down streets, along the tram lines, and it was 2½ hours before they were collected and another start made. But considering the miles which some of these debilitated animals had travelled in that time, most of them must have started more dead than alive on their 25 mile journey. The writer had been notified that 200 would arrive by about midday, but when it got to 3 or 4 o'clock, without a sign of any arrival, he rode a few miles across the

veldt, and struck the road where the animals would have to turn off to the farm. After he had waited a long time, about 50 head appeared, done up, but slogging along as hard as they could with a black mare leading. Seeing no one in charge, the writer turned them off the road on to the veldt in the direction of the farm. Presently up came an Indian on a jaded and debilitated mount. His horse was quite done up, but he was sent on, to turn the horses, if possible, but this, it is needless to say, he could not do. Then came a few struggling lots until the number reached 90 head with about 6 or 7 mounted Indians. When asked where the remainder were, they said that, when half way, the mob separated into two portions, one lot galloping on, while the other turned and galloped back to the depot. As soon as the animals were kraaled, they were counted, the total being 97 all told, including the invalids that had been playing the part of stock horses, some of which simply laid down and died.

The next day the writer was informed by a farmer that there were a number of Government horses on the veldt. He himself had turned some of them on to his farm. A wire was sent to the O.C. notifying this, and advising that some men should be sent to collect them. No notice, however, was taken of this message, so the writer went out and collected over 30 head and put them into one of the camps. If his memory serve him, 7 more were in the Addo Bush

on the other side of the river, and when he left the farm there were still 5 over there—a disquieting circumstance, as the elephants were wild and dangerous thereabouts, having just killed Mr. Attrill, a gentleman farmer in the district.

For several days the writer hunted for these horses and saw them many times, but could not get them out of this bush, in which the tracks were all intricate and narrow, in addition to which one never knew when he would bump up against “Jumbo.”

Another farmer, and noted hunter, Mr. “Jack” Harvey, had a very narrow squeak. He was an experienced elephant hunter, having killed two or three that year. One day he was riding along through this particular bush and was chased by an elephant, which nearly succeeded in catching him, although he was mounted on a good pony. The elephant caught his water flask, which was flying behind him and broke the strap. She, for it was a female elephant, then sat and wriggled upon it, treating the bottle in the same manner as poor Mr. Attrill had been treated a short time previously.

To hark back to the notification by wire to the O.C. of the horses straying on the veldt, the writer was informed by the one of the “very best” who was responsible for the whole disaster, that “all the balance of the 200 had returned to the depot, so that there was no occasion to reply to the wire.”

One wonders how he accounted in his daily “state”

for his deficiency of from 30 to 40 head, for the writer never added these on to his "state"; he simply looked after them and left them on the farm when handing it over, the number of animals on the farm being of course in excess of that debited against it.

Another lot was again sent by road in spite of the writer's remonstrance, but these were led by Indians, each man having four or five head. The horses, however, arrived in a fearfully weak and tired condition, several having had to be left on the road, to die where they fell. The percentage of deaths on these two lots must have been from 15 to 20 per cent. The writer reported the matter to the O.C. at the time, in writing.

To turn to another incident, an officer of high command once said to the writer, "Do you think you would lose 235 mules out of one thousand, driving them 30 to 40 miles?"

The writer said, "No! certainly not"; as far as his experience, which was an extended one, went in driving stock of all kinds, the numbers generally increased on the way. Of course most of the 235 head, referred to in the question, were ultimately recovered, but nevertheless they were temporarily lost.

Here is another illustration of the incompetency of depot management. At a particular depot (referred to on page 76), at which horses were supposed to qualify for the front in a week or less after their arrival, there was a small confined space in which the animals would be secure from getting lost, though

losses of many kinds, including horses, were of daily and nightly occurrence. Here they were so closely packed together (not tied up) that an agile person would have had little difficulty in walking on their backs from one end to the other all over the enclosure. The writer has seen many mobs of horses in yards, but never in his life saw so many hundreds of animals in so small a space. They were never tied up, so their feet can never have received attention. If this enclosure happened to be vacant for a day, the sick horses were exercised in it, and sometimes watered and fed in it—a nice thing for the fresh arrivals who would perhaps be there on the following day. Needless to say, there was no cleanliness in this swarming yard. The hay was always thrown upon the ground, scattered in all directions. The horses had to eat it—clean or dirty—as hay ration was all they were getting. The day before leaving, however, they were, as a rule, treated to oats and bran, put upon the top of the hay, which was laid in parallel lines on the ground. There were a few old water-troughs lying about unused, and there were at that time only three ordinary sized water-troughs in use and a few tubs for the entire depot. These few appliances had to water perhaps 3,000 horses, sick and well all using the same troughs and tubs. Mention must be made of a stinking water hole, to which the writer drew the attention of the O.C., stating that it was so filthy that it should be fenced round, so that the horses could not get into it

His reply was, "Oh! they don't drink it, and it is so nice to see them standing in it, cooling themselves this hot weather." This they did all day long when not feeding, until the water became nothing better than urine and manure. After a peculiar blood disease had broken out at this camp, caused by this very filthy pond, it had to be railed round and the horses were prevented going into it at all.

This camp was condemned shortly afterwards, as being insanitary, and enteric broke out in it. The writer became ill, although he had not for a long while previous to this slept in the camp at all. The doctor died a short time after leaving the depot; the writer got into the hospital, and all the men were more or less sick. Ultimately there were several cases of bubonic plague. Yet the horses in this depot were supposed to be getting "acclimatized" and ready for the front!

The number of sick horses was seldom less than 500—more often 600. There were three C.V.S., only one of whom appeared to take any interest whatever in his duties. One of his colleagues, however, kept his race-horses in the depot. But since only one of the three veterinary surgeons was really working, the number of sick were more than could be attended to properly. Some of the cases were wounds not worth treating. Pneumonia, purpura, influenza, coughs also existed, with a few cases of mange, ringworm, and glanders. In some cases the patients had been under treatment

for four months, and, under the most favourable circumstances, would have taken four months more to reach the convalescent stage. Among these patients were horses which no treatment could render serviceable again for remounts. When the Inspecting Officer came round and inquired into these cases, he ordered the patients to be destroyed; and quite rightly too. Each individual case was made the subject of the following questions—"What is the matter with this one? How long has it been in this state? How long will it take to effect a cure?" This was frequently abruptly ended by the words, "Shoot him at once; his case was practically hopeless from the first. Why do you keep such things?" The Inspecting Officer was very angry at what he saw in this depot, but though the senior veterinary officer was often unable to answer his questions correctly, owing to ignorance of the cases under investigation, he was not to be nonplussed and always told his questioner "something."

The Assistant-Inspector of Remounts—Colonel Birkbeck—specially visited this depot, and great alterations were made in the personnel, and improvements of every description were ordered, the writer assisting materially in the erection and planning of the kraals, etc., and to-day it is one of the best organised depots in South Africa. But why was this not done before? Because the O.C., nice as he was, was an incompetent Remount Officer and either could not see

the requirements, or was afraid to ask for money to spend on the place at all. "Improvise" was again the motto; "red tape" was again paramount.

The Remount Depots were not studied by some of the "red tapes." Most of them refused nearly always to pass "expenses." At first they could not be made to understand that their action was false economy; that this delay was costing thousands of pounds. Every officer, without distinction of rank or duty, was afraid more or less of getting "Stellenbosched," except a few of the wealthy Reservists who wanted to get back home under any circumstances as soon as possible.

There was a deal of unnecessary and ignorant cruelty daily taking place at most of the depots in the early stages of organisation. It was quite the exception for a Remount O.C. to be able to keep pace with the requirements of his depot. The A.I.R. was always at this period on the move, travelling from farm to depot, and from depot to farm, but he was only one man, and it is marvellous that he should be alive to-day, for he must have had many narrow escapes from death and capture, etc. He was naturally kind-hearted to all animals, and never failed to express most emphatically his indignation at any neglect for the comfort and welfare of the animals that could and ought to have been avoided. However, even his orders were sometimes questioned by the "red tape" at the base, who probably knew absolutely nothing about Remount requirements, on the particular depot under considera-

tion. Hence two months, or more perhaps, would be thrown away, with a corresponding waste of horses.

In one particular instance where the exigency was so apparent that it would have been almost criminal to delay the organisation and buildings required, sanction was given, the work was done promptly and pushed along. The pushing can be done if the work is contracted for. But oh! Kaffir labour under Imperial supervision is more costly almost than anything else; the beggars won't work if the overseer is not allowed to use moderate corporal punishment. The writer feels no less kindly towards the black than to the white; but anyone who can get labour out of a Kaffir without carrying a sjambok is equal to the Australian who can drive a team of bullocks and not swear.

Then of course the Government had to buy materials which could only be resold at a loss. All the buildings were erected of galvaized iron and wood. When sold the timber would fetch probably a fourth and the iron about three-quarters of their original cost.

It may be instructive to say that a kraal, in the sense of a remount depot, is a fenced-in place whose dimensions are from (say) 50 yards by 70 yards up to a maximum of from 200 yards by (say) 100 yards, with mangers in it, and sometimes water-troughs. These kraals were supposed to be constructed chiefly for the reception of horses, for sorting as to condition generally, and size, etc. The horses would be taken out of the trains arriving from the disembarking port, and

put into one of the kraals, fresh perhaps from the ship, or in most cases only a few hours or days after landing. That being so, any person with a knowledge of what a horse can do when it chooses, and especially of what several horses can do when they happen to have the same idea at the same time, such as that of escaping from confinement and having a "go on their own" on the veldt, might naturally suppose that a pretty strong fence would be required to restrain them. Yet in one depot 4 in. by 4 in. soft wood posts, 2 ft. only in the ground (which was soft), and 15 yards apart, with four strands of wire run through, was considered sufficient. A tissue-paper fence would have been of greater service. The horses were put into it on arrival, or, at night and the "gate" fastened. The "gate," by the bye, consisted of three strands of wire, the ends of which had to be untwisted every time the "gate" was opened and retwisted round the nearest post again when it was desired to close the entrance.

This opening and shutting of the "gate" took place about fifty times a day. In wet muddy weather the wagons of forage continually passing over the "gate" when it was on the ground, would hide it from view; and if you particularly wanted to twist it up again you had to perform a little "mud-larking," and grope about in the filthiest of all compounds of manure the writer ever smelt. Now, to make this weak fence objectionable to the horses, so that they would not rub against it, and thus cause it to fall, as it did nightly,

barbed wire was run along the top. No more barbarous expedient could have been contrived. What does a horse know about barbed wire, till he has scored himself all over, like a leg of pork? Terrible were the cuts inflicted by this fence; they were half an inch deep and ran the whole length of the horses' sides, or across and across their chests. Now all this suffering could have been avoided if whole timber fences had been erected. The cost would certainly have been more, but they would have been serviceable for a long time, and the animals would not have been injured by them. Or a compromise might have been struck for the sake of economy, by using three strands of wire with a wooden top and centre rail, and 6 in. by 4 in. post (instead of 4 in. by 4 in.), 9 feet apart, and 2 ft. 6 in. in the ground. What strength is there in soft wood posts 4 in. by 4 in., 15 yards apart, sunk 2 ft. in soft ground? Yet thousands of pounds have been spent in erecting such fences—the whole of which, if sold to-day, would not fetch 1s. 6d., whereas the cost of labour for maintaining them has been absurdly disproportionate, two or three gangs of "boys" doing nothing else but this work, another example of having the wrong man in the wrong place.

As the word "improvise" was always cropping up, the writer one day said that he did not think the Imperial Government would countenance improvising at all, or encourage any of their servants to do so; that "improvise was another word for the delay of work

that was absolutely necessary, and which would ultimately have to be done after the "improvising" had cost as much as, or more than, the entire outlay would have been had the work been done in the first instance. The wastage of money, which was chronic and enormous, arose from the entire want of knowledge of present necessities and future requirements, accompanied by a desire to save public money if possible. But officialdom went the wrong way, and did not know it, and probably may not know it now. The writer's statements can be proved by reference to the figures of any depot, viz., the cost of the labour and material employed, the value of the stock that has died and the cost of improvements effected.

It is not conducive to the health or to the welfare of an animal to stand and shiver all the night, suffering from exposure to the keen and cutting cold winds. Don't run away with the idea that Africa is always sunny and warm. It is sunny, in the day, but it is always cold at night. Now, horses will not improve in condition if they are exposed to any sort of cold winds nightly, yet on one depot which had been running about a year, not a shed of any kind whatever had been erected for the general shelter of the horses, but merely a few small ones for the very worst of the sick animals. The horses in daily use by the officers and personnel in their duties were without shelter of any kind; and the kraal was so placed that the occupants of it had their chests and vital spots always

exposed to the worst of the cold winds that prevail in this particular district right through the winter. The writer visited this depot in the winter and saw the working horses standing shivering in the cold blasts, and suggested to the O.C. that it would be well to instruct the "boys" to bring in a lot of scrub and to make a bush fence by interlacing the bush with the wires of the fence first right round the outside fence, and then to subdivide the enclosure so as to protect the animals from the extreme cold and bleak winds from any quarter. The writer, on his next visit to this depot, noticed that his suggestion had not borne fruit, but on a subsequent visit he saw that the proposed alteration had been carried out. The delay in a necessary reform would not, however, have occurred if the O.C. had been an "up-to-date" Remount Officer, or even if he had possessed any practical knowledge of horses at all; but he was devoid of that knowledge, as he frequently and voluntarily admitted.

The writer believes that to this day there are no roofed shelters for horses in this depot; and it would not be amiss to see what amount of money has been spent thereon in so-called improvements, and what there is to show for it—the cost of labour, including maintenance, being taken into consideration. The latter item would be enormous; at a rough estimate this depot was costing at one time quite £1,300 (if not more) per month for white and Kaffir labour.

Proper shedding was always difficult to get, though

most important, and the lack of it was noticeable even with the "sick lines." Certainly from the writer's experience of the C.V.S. he was utterly wanting in organisation, or the requirements to meet emergency: this has been strikingly apparent right up to date. Of course, matters have greatly improved. The experience gained at an immense cost to the public purse showed, that, unless suitable provision was made for the welfare and care of the remounts, the war could not proceed successfully.

A word must now be said about the reckless manner in which Kaffir labour was hired during the early period of the war. There was sometimes a temporary famine in Kaffirs, and at first they were greatly overpaid, the wages per man being £4 10s. 0d. per month. This was reduced to £3 10s. 0d., then to £3 0s. 0d., then to £2 10s., and afterwards to £2 per month, always with rations in every case. This decrease in pay caused a lot of dissatisfaction among the Kaffirs. The Kaffir has not many expensive habits, and, as a rule, will only work as long as it is absolutely necessary for him to do so. As soon as he acquires enough money to keep him in his own country for a few months he makes for home, seldom notifying his intention to his employers. He is simply "non est" in the morning. In order to be fortified against his sudden defection, it was necessary to hire more Kaffirs than were actually required, but the number hired was excessive, even allowing for the Kaffir's erratic nature. Kaffir

labour is much better organized now than it was, especially in the Eastern division, but in cases now in the mind of the writer there was a great and inexcusable waste of money in hiring superfluous men.

Another glaring scandal is the waste of good forage. It was of course worst at the outset of the war, but it has not yet ceased. The writer has seen rows of hay laid in parallel lines on the ground, and good oats and bran put on top of it. At the first bite, hay and all were thrown into dust, or mud about a foot thick. And while the above is a particularly revolting instance, he has seen this horrible system of feeding on oats off the ground practised as part of a regular routine in many depots throughout the Colonies. Now, where oats cost (including freight, carriage, etc.) three pence per lb. and bran about the same, and hay not much less, where does the economy of "improvising" come in? This waste occurred simply because "red tape" would not sanction the outlay of sufficient money for mangers. Now, unbreakable mangers could have been made for about 40s. each capable of feeding nearly thirty horses at the same time. In some places relays could have been fed from the same set of mangers, although this is difficult to accomplish unless you have surplus kraals. In that case the horses can be shifted about and made to feed on hay off the ground in one kraal, and on oats and bran in the kraal fitted with mangers. But this is not a good system at all; it sometimes leads to confusion, and some of the slow feeding horses do not get their full rations.

Thousands of moveable mangers, of a portable pattern, should have been made at the base and supplied to depots and farms as required; these could have been made for 47s. 6d. each, or less in Capetown. The writer invented three different patterns of manger at the request of Col. Ryder, S.O.R.-C.C., and made one manger of each pattern. Whether they have been utilized he knows not, as he was immediately afterwards sent to England (for conducting duties with horse ships), before any bulk order was given. Wooden mangers cost thirty shillings each, one-half the size of those constructed by the writer, and are so very easily smashed and destroyed as to be practically useless. A good iron one is almost unbreakable, and will last for years. It is not quite so bad to feed on hay off the ground on farms, as the locality can be shifted daily on to clean ground. Feeding on oats off the ground causes death to debilitated horses, and, if this plan is adopted, horses cannot be made to improve in condition so as to be got fit for active service; hence serious delay may take place in horsing the front at perhaps a most critical period.

The subject now to be touched on is not actually a part of remount work, but closely allied to it: the writer refers to the care of the forage at the base. The enormous loss on this alone must run into thousands of pounds, because it does not end in the loss of the value of the food at the base. This food is trained-up long distances to all the depots, and, when on arrival

at its various destinations, the bales are cut open for use the contents are frequently found to be all rotten and absolutely worthless. There is also the expense of railway freight and frequently cartage as well, to pay on it. But the unfortunate horses suffer also; it is in their "allowance of rations," and they have either to eat this muck or starve. Many a time the writer has in a terse sentence expressed the indignation against it which the horses cannot express for themselves. The bales of Lucerne forwarded were frequently quite rotten. As this decay did not begin from the centre it could not have arisen from the hay having been originally badly made. The outsides were wet, and from the outsides to the centre mouldy and quite unfit for use. Anyone visiting Durban can see thousands of bales of hay wasting on the quay. It is built up in stacks which are ineffectually covered with tarpaulins. Some of these stacks are of an immense size, 60 to 70 feet high, and probably higher, and about 60 yards long, if not longer. The inference is that the bottom bales and those for some distance up the stack have been in the same position for a long time. It is not possible to "shed" all this hay, but some other means than the one now employed might have been tried whereby to reduce to a minimum the great wastage by damp. If the remedy is to be sought in the choice of hay it may be useful to remark that the Australian oaten hay is the very best of all hay and is seldom mouldy.

The bran also suffers badly, and is frequently quite unusable when it arrives at the depot. It turns out of the bags in hard lumps and cakes, and when these are broken, the inside proves to be always more or less decomposed. This is very hurtful to horses allowed to eat it, as it produces most violent diarrhœa, which frequently scours them to death.

We will now glance at the water question. South Africa is noted for three things: "rivers without water, birds without song, and women without love." Of the existence of the waterless rivers the writer can speak with feeling, as no doubt many thousands of others can. Some rivers only exist in name; their beds are always dry, unless rain falls into them, and then they only retain the water for a few hours. Some, but very few, rivers run more or less always, and their water, which is perhaps only an inch or two deep, is clear if the bed of the river is not disturbed. Such shallow water must necessarily get very hot, although it is running, but the animal in a natural state will always drink from a pool in a shady spot where the water is deep and cool. But the normal number of animals who drink there is perhaps only ten or twenty. This number is suddenly brought up to 3,000 or more. The animals are driven across the river night and morning, to the grazing in the morning, to the kraals at night; and they are supposed to get a drink each way. But seventy-five or eighty per cent. of them never stop for a drink; the water has become mud by the succes-

sion of feet passing through it. Yet "one of the very best" failed to see the necessity of erecting water-troughs, pumping water into them out of a shady pool, and of always keeping them filled with clean and cool water, so that the horses could drink at any time of the day or night, until the condition of the animals was palpably becoming worse daily. That the troughs and pumps were absolutely necessary was only admitted by the O.C. after a lot of expensive experiments had been made with a view to dispensing with these articles, which the writer had recommended as the primary step to be taken and whose adoption would have represented an outlay of perhaps only £200. The "very best" could not understand why the great number of horses in his charge did not pursue the course of nature and drink the water out of the river, when given two opportunities daily for doing so. The writer understood the reason as well as any other person would who knows the natural habits of a horse living entirely in a natural state. He knew too that a horse which has been reared in a civilized state, has lost some of his natural instinct and learned more or less to depend upon man.

Before we leave the subject of water, an incident shall be related which was at once sensational and reflecting grave discredit on the officer responsible for its occurrence.

There had been a great number of Americans and Hungarians with a few English landed in fairly good

condition all round, some being mud-fat. They were received at the depot and put into kraals which were strongly fenced, but the water-supply was insufficient for more than the number which it was arranged the kraals should contain. That number would have represented a maximum of 140 head in each kraal, but in spite of this fact being well known to all in the depot, 400 to 500 head were put into each one. Moreover, no orders were given to water the horses at outside troughs previous to their being kraaled. The writer happened to visit the depot on the night the horses were landed. It was on a Saturday, and he saw that the horses were then mad for water, jumping in and out of the troughs, licking the water up as it trickled into the troughs, through a 1 inch supply pipe, kicking, biting and fighting each other for a single drop. This must have gone on for a few hours, until, maddened by thirst, the animals made a rush simultaneously, smashed through the fence and out into the open, many falling in the crush. Away went a mob of 500 horses, stampeding down the main street, a sight that none in that town had ever witnessed before. The animals were like a mighty avalanche, their shoes striking fire as they tore along, oblivious to everything—except the water which was actually life to them at the time. It is well known to all horsemen that horses will stampede for water before anything else, and when they do they always make for the place where they had their last drink. So they made for where they had

water last—the ship—and the mile or so that divided the depot from the quay was soon traversed. It was Sunday, and very few people were about, but these flew in all directions, dodging into doorways, etc., to escape being trampled to death.

Windows and doors were opened with caution, as no one could imagine the cause of the great noise. Some attributed it to thunder, others to an earthquake, as the animals in their mad and furious career seemed to shake the very earth. The quay was guarded by high gates which were shut at the time. About half the mob went through these gates just as if they were tissue-paper and continued their mad career right to the end of the quay whence some even fell into the sea, but swam ashore again; while others owing to the temporary block of horses at the gates, doubled back a bit and continued their stampede along the railway line.

At this juncture a train which unfortunately happened to be coming in an opposite direction, cut through the poor maddened brutes. Many were killed on the spot, others had their legs and backs broken, while others received such fearful injuries that they were shot as soon as possible.

The writer was informed that 80 head were missing after allowing for the deaths, and as these horses had been shipped unbranded, there was absolutely no means of legally identifying them. Some were brought in by the finders, and others recovered by men espec

ally sent out in search for them. What the ultimate loss was the writer does not know, but he does not think it was many less than the number noted above.

The man responsible for this disaster was one of the "very best," a man most humane and kind to animals and respected by all who knew him; yet he was at once incapable as regards his duties and contemptuous of advice. The writer believes that this officer has now left the Remount Service.

The Remount Officer has been a hard-worked man, bullied and badgered by everybody; not knowing from whom to take definite and final orders; receiving instructions diametrically opposite to each other, from those in authority over him, a dozen times a day. This, or that, is not to be done without "Someone's" authority, and this, or that, is to be done by "Someone else's" authority. The O.C.'s hand has been always tied, and he has frequently been blamed for faults and mistakes not his own, and beyond his control.

"Red Tape" had a lot to answer for in the early days of Remount Depots, and frequently delayed the execution of urgent orders from the Front. When it became apparent that the War was to be a big thing for the Remount Department to cope with, would it not have been advisable to have sent Cavalry Officers instead of so many Infantry Officers—some of whom it is true did their best and were most energetic while deploring their want of knowledge of horses but who were nevertheless unable to meet requirements. "Red

Tape" was aware of their incapacity, and that was no doubt the reason why there was such reluctance shown to grant any considerable amount of money for expenditure on buildings or improvements. Moreover, no one knew how long any particular farm or depot would exist, and was fearful of throwing money away on impermanent undertakings. Most officers in South Africa avoid responsibility when they can: it is a common saying with them that they never know that they have done wrong till the bill comes in.

To conclude on a prophetic note, the Remount Service of the future in times of peace will be formed on the skeleton system, so that efficient heads of each department will always be actually in evidence.