TROOPING SEASON 1914-1915: A FEW NOTES.

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In the Journal of the Royal Army Medical Corps of last October some notes were given for the last trooping season. As they appear to have been appreciated I submit similar notes, somewhat amplified, in the hope that they may continue to be of some assistance to those officers about to embark. I give them under three separate headings.

(1) OUTWARD AND HOMEWARD VOYAGES.

Vaccines and Serum.—Each transport is supplied with twenty phials of antidiphtheritic serum and fifty tubes of vaccine lymph. These are kept in the cold storage room on board until required. As an instance of not bearing this in mind, a medical officer reported he had no antidiphtheritic serum for a case on board after taking over and signing for it. If there is any doubt about not being able to find what one requires, it is always advisable—after questioning the Royal Army Medical Corps non-commissioned officer of the permanent staff—to refer to the "Notes for Guidance of Medical Officers in Charge of Hired Transports," a copy of which is placed in the hospital of each vessel, or to approach the troop officer, who is a ship’s officer. Under his charge is a certain amount of medical equipment and outside his duties he "knows the ropes." The medical officer of an Indian trooper fares better than his brother officer on a colonial transport, as the latter does not possess a permanent Royal Army Medical Corps staff, consequently the non-commissioned officer embarked is always, comparatively speaking, new to his duties.

Isolation Hospital.—There is one on each transport. It may be used for any infectious disease (except tubercle) and diseases due to the animal and vegetable parasites, which may occur during the voyage, and for all classes of passengers, including the crew, both native and otherwise. Tubercle cases are very seldom embarked at home, and those from India are embarked only on the "Plassy," on which there are special wards for men and women.

Surplus Accommodation for Sick.—In the event of the swinging cots in the troop hospital all being occupied there are ample sling cots on board in charge of the troop officer. This still does not seem to be always realized.
Children under Two Years of Age.—Such children are not entitled to any accommodation. To obviate the discomfort of a mother having her child to sleep with her, there is a limited supply of small cots, which hook to the outside of the bunks, and in them children are perfectly secure. They can be taken down, folded up, and put away in the mornings and have been a boon to many mothers, who prefer them to any form of cradle they may bring with them.

Women employed as Nurses on Board.—A mistake is sometimes made in promising women passengers remuneration for nursing, in excess of what the regulations allow. On one occasion two women on a transport were each promised five shillings a day for nursing a case, but they afterwards received only one shilling a day in accordance with article 919 of the pay warrant. The wording of this article is somewhat ambiguous, and might lead one to conclude that only one woman was entitled to payment. The pay authorities took this view, but finally waived their objection. On Indian transports there are two stewardesses; they form part of the crew complement, and are not under the orders of the medical officer. Their duties are to assist ladies, women and children when settling in their cabins and quarters, and generally to look after their comfort, especially those who are seasick.

“Notes for Guidance on Outward or Homeward Voyage.”—Any prospective medical officer in charge of a hired transport can be furnished with this pamphlet by applying to the Embarking Medical Officer, The Docks, Southampton.

(2) OUTWARD VOYAGES ONLY.

Instruction to Troops.—Besides the routine duties and usual inspections, certain lectures have to be given during the outward voyage. Pamphlets are placed on board all transports, viz: “Hints on the Preservation of Health in India,” “Precautions against Enteric Fever in India,” “Hints on the Management of a Child’s Health in India,” and “Instructions regarding the Prevention of Venereal Diseases.” Medical officers have to explain these pamphlets to all troops, etc., during the voyage. With regard to medical inspections for venereal disease, it is laid down in “Instructions for Guidance of Officers arriving with British Troops at Bombay and Karachi” (published by authority, 1913), that these inspections will be carried out on embarkation, seven days thereafter, and a third time before arrival. A report of these inspections has to be handed over personally to the assistant
director of medical services on arrival for transmission to the War Office.

**Antityphoid Inoculation.**—When the first dose has not been given prior to embarkation, both doses can be given on board, provided the first dose be given at least fourteen days, and the second, say, four days before disembarkation. Nominal rolls are placed on board of men who have received their first inoculation; before departure from their station, it is unnecessary for medical officers to send the vaccine for the second inoculation, which may still require to be done, for enough vaccine, together with the necessary pink slips, is placed on each transport to inoculate six hundred men with their first and second doses.

**Sterilized Milk.**—Officers or their wives still go to the unnecessary trouble of ordering, or bringing with them to Southampton, sterilized milk for their children. There is a plentiful supply at the embarking shed, and it can be relied on, as its preparation is under supervision, and its cost is moderate; single bottles cost 4½d. per quart, and a refund of 2½d. is made on each empty bottle. Any amount can be bought and no charge is made for packing.

**Baggage.**—Motor cars are absolutely prohibited. None have ever been placed on board to my knowledge. A motor cycle may be taken if there is room for it in the hold, and provided a certificate be furnished stating that there is no petrol in the tank. It must be properly packed. Grand pianos are inadmissible.

(3) **Homeward Voyages only.**

**Lunatics.**—Officers very often find it necessary to employ attendants on lunatics, in which case only two are allowed per lunatic. This number is often exceeded. As an instance, one season as many as twelve attendants were engaged to look after three lunatics, and when the paymaster said he could only pay six, it caused so much discontent that the medical officer made up the difference. These attendants must not be confused with the guard over the lunatics. The latter is purely for guard duty and gets no remuneration, whereas the attendants look after the patient day and night, dressing, bathing, feeding him, etc.

The disposal of lunatics on arrival does not appear to be generally understood. Officers, unless their parents are ready to take them over on arrival, are sent to Netley. All soldiers proceed to Netley. The embarking medical officer arranges for women to be taken over locally by the relieving officer. If their husbands or parents wish to take charge of them, they can do so, provided they realize their responsibility and have previously made
arrangements for the care of the patient, which must be to the satisfaction of the embarking medical officer.

Infectious Cases.—The outbreak of infectious diseases, especially measles and chicken-pox, occurs more frequently on board ship than might be supposed. The routine adopted for the disposal of such cases on arrival at Southampton is as follows: Soldiers are sent to Netley. Women and children are admitted to the Isolation Hospital at Southampton, where they are treated at Government expense. Women and children suffering from tuberculosis are sent to their homes. If unable to travel they are admitted temporarily to the Sanatorium at Southampton.

The responsibility of thoroughly disinfecting the clothing, etc., of direct contacts before disembarkation rests with the S.M.O. of the transport.

With regard to the disposal of contacts an infected troopship is treated in exactly the same manner as a private steamer by the port health authorities, i.e., the M.O.H. sends out notices by post to town and district M.O.H.'s. to keep under observation contacts proceeding thither. In addition the embarking commandant at Southampton sends out to all G.O.C.'s, etc., concerned, telegrams stating what troops, furlough men, and unaccompanied families are proceeding to their command, with time of arrival, and adding to the wires, "Keep under observation (measles, etc.), last contact (date)." This often necessitates a large number of wires being sent all over the United Kingdom. Sometimes furlough men and unaccompanied families proceed elsewhere than to the addresses they have given.

It might be mentioned that on arrival off Netley the M.O.H. or his representative boards the vessel and requires the names and addresses of all infectious cases and suspects, which include also cases of tubercle amongst invalided officers and others.

Hints to Officers.—As officers disembarking are invariably not posted to a station, they are considered as on leave until they receive instructions from the War Office as to where and when they are to join for duty. Being on leave they are not entitled to railway warrants, but they are entitled to such warrants from the place where they may be on leave to their new station. For this warrant they should apply to the head-quarters of the command to which they are posted, as the moment they leave the transport on leave they, ipso facto, cease to be in any way under the jurisdiction of the embarking commandant. If the cost of the railway warrant for the journey from the place where on leave exceeds the cost of a
direct journey between Southampton and the new station, the
difference has to be paid by the officer, and if less there is no claim
on the officer's part for the difference, the public being the gainer.

Baggage.—All officers disembarking are responsible for the
collection of their baggage, clearing it through the Customs, and
for its removal from the trooping shed. All charges incurred
through the employment of an agent on this account, except
agency charges, are admissible against the public for the regulation
quantity of baggage, and should be recovered on a travelling claim
(A.F. 01771). Agency charges are only admissible when the officer
is prevented by military duty, e.g., accompanying the sick to
Netley, when he ought to get a certificate signed to this effect by
the embarking commandant or officer in charge, Netley. When
an officer is not posted on arrival home and his baggage is con­
sequently stored, he should claim for storage up to the time he
receives orders to join his new station. I state this advisedly, as
there is no hard-and-fast regulation under which the claim would
be admissible at first sight without any question from the financial
authorities. It is, however, well within the spirit of the allowance
regulations that all legitimate out-of-pocket expenses incurred by
officers in connexion with their regulation quantity of baggage
when travelling on duty are payable by the State. The storage of
baggage while on leave, and not in receipt of lodging money, is
clearly legislated for by para. 274 (b) *ibid.*, under which a G.O.C.
can approve of the cost of such storage. Consequently there
should be no great difficulty in getting the approval of a G.O.C.-in-C.
of a Command for the payment of charges for the storage of
baggage in such circumstances. All regulation travelling expenses
are now granted to officers from the port of disembarkation
(para. 300 (A) A.R. (Army Order [18/1913]). An officer comes home
on duty, and as he is not posted, he has no other alternative but to
store his baggage until he is ordered to a station. For consigning
military baggage by rail, Army Form P. 1904, which can always be
obtained from the disembark-office, should be used, otherwise full
civil rates are levied. Baggage is not disposed of by the disembark­
ation staff. If an officer does not wish to employ an agent, he
should apply to the dock company’s representative, who will take
over his baggage and consign it; but in this case he should remain
until all his baggage is landed and personally clear it through the
Customs.

Arrival Reports.—It is very necessary that offices should report
their arrival home on the blue official forms supplied to every
transport for the purpose.