

The enormous amount of additional work thrown upon the different branches of my staff and upon the administrative Services and Departments by such fighting as that of March and April can readily be imagined. The evacuation of great masses of stores, hospitals, rolling-stock, agricultural implements, non-combatants, labour units and civilians from the battle area, and the supplying of the troops in constantly changing places with food and ammunition called for the highest powers of organisation, the most constant forethought and supervision, and the most devoted labour. That all this work was carried out so smoothly and successfully under circumstances of extraordinary difficulty, and that there was never any lack of food or ammunition for the troops reflects the very highest credit on all concerned.

Upon the Transportation Services, moreover, and particularly upon the omnibus parks, the rapid movement of reserves placed a peculiarly heavy strain, which the different units concerned never failed to meet successfully.

Much additional work, also under circumstances of unusual difficulty and danger, has necessarily been thrown upon the medical and nursing services. The conduct of the Royal Army Medical Corps and Medical Corps of the Overseas Dominions has again been beyond all praise, while the efficient organisation of the medical services as a whole proved itself fully equal to the occasion. I take this opportunity to acknowledge the lasting debt due in this connection to Lt.-General Sir A. T. Sloggett, K.C.B., K.C.M.G., K.C.V.O., K.H.S., until recently Director-General of Medical Services, with whom the work of the medical services has so long been identified.

I desire to express my deep appreciation of the loyal and devoted work of the commanders and staffs of all formations of the British Army serving under me in a period of exceptional stress. In defensive battles of such magnitude as those which have just been fought to a successful conclusion the part played by subordinate commanders and staffs is frequently of decisive importance, demanding great strength of character and a high standard of ability, while the physical and mental strain is correspondingly great. That mistakes should occur in such circumstances is almost inevitable. That they should have been so few as they were and that control should at all times have been so well maintained reflects the greatest credit upon the individuals concerned, upon the staff arrangements of all formations, and the Army as a whole.

The part played by the various branches of the staff of an Army in the organisation and control of battles such as those referred to in this dispatch is one of the utmost importance, and the strain thrown upon the individual officers composing them is very great.

I wish to thank the heads of the various branches of the staff and of departments and services for the essential share that they and their subordinates have taken in preventing the realisation of the enemy's plans.

I am glad to acknowledge the great assistance given me at all times by my Chief of the General Staff, Lieut.-General the Hon. Sir H. A. Lawrence, K.C.B., whose cool judgment, equable temperament and unfailing military insight were of the utmost value in circum-

stances demanding the exercise of such qualities in a peculiarly high degree.

The rapid incorporation of reinforcements and reorganisation of exhausted units without which the battle could scarcely have been maintained was most ably carried out by the Adjutant-General, Lieut.-General Sir G. H. Fowke, K.C.B., K.C.M.G., and his branch.

The work of my Quartermaster-General's Branch under Lieutenant-General Travers Clarke, C.B., in the provision and replacement of munitions and supplies of all kinds was of the highest importance, and was performed with the greatest ability and success.

The large and incessant demands made upon the Transportation Services in the course of the battle were met in the most admirable manner by my Director-General, Brigadier-General S. D'A. Crookshank, C.I.E., M.V.O., D.S.O., and those working under him.

My thanks are due also to the subordinate members of my Staff at General Headquarters, whose heavy and responsible duties were discharged throughout the period under review with most commendable smoothness and efficiency. In particular I desire to mention the services of my Artillery Adviser, Major-General Sir J. F. N. Birch, K.C.M.G., C.B.; my Engineer-in-Chief, Major-General G. M. Heath, C.B., D.S.O.; the Head of the Operations Section, Major-General J. H. Davidson, C.B., D.S.O.; the Head of the Staff Duties Section, Major-General G. P. Dawnay, C.M.G., D.S.O.; the Head of my Intelligence Section, Brigadier-General E. W. Cox, D.S.O.; and my Director of Army Signals, Major-General Sir J. S. Fowler, K.C.M.G., C.B., D.S.O.

My thanks, and those of all ranks of the British Armies in France, are due also to the different authorities at home, whose prompt and energetic action enabled the unavoidable losses of personnel and material incurred during the battle to be replaced with such rapidity. We are glad also to place on record once again our deep appreciation of the work of the Royal Navy, upon whose unceasing efforts depend the maintenance of the British Forces in France.

#### *Our Allies.*

(71) I cannot close this report without paying my personal tribute to the ready and effective assistance given me by the French and Belgian Higher Command in the course of the Somme and Lys battles. Reference has already been made to the schemes for mutual co-operation and assistance between the French and British Armies which formed so important a part of the Allied plan for the year's campaign. These schemes have been carried out with absolute loyalty. The support rendered by French troops south of the Somme and north of the Lys, and by Belgian troops in taking over the responsibility for the greater part of the line previously held by British troops north of Ypres, has been of incalculable value.

I desire also to express my appreciation of the services rendered by the Portuguese troops who had held a sector of my front continuously throughout the winter months, and on the 9th April were called upon to withstand the assault of greatly superior forces.