

## CHAPTER I

### THE PRINCIPLES OF MILITARY ADMINISTRATION

#### Historical Precedents.

IN his book, "Science of War," Colonel Henderson teaches us that war is firstly a matter of movement, secondly of supply, and thirdly of destruction. The teaching of military history amply justifies the truth of this statement, and even the most cursory study will show that our military plans must be administratively sound, or they are doomed to failure. This has always been true in the past, but it is doubly so now, and likely to become even more so in the future. The growth of the mechanical devices of war and the higher standard of equipment of modern armies have made the problems of maintenance many times more complicated than in any previous war in history. Strategy and tactics are now bound hand and foot by administration. The big problems of maintenance must be solved before a war can be brought to a successful conclusion; the side that fails to solve them will be defeated. The problems are no longer those of the soldier alone, nor even of the three fighting services; they are closely interwoven with the whole machinery of government and the entire economic life of the country.

In the good old days an army went off to war and lived on the country through which it moved, and frequently exterminated its enemy entirely, as one means of simplifying the supply problem. Later armies dragged fairly considerable supply columns along with them to carry their needs for the period of the campaign, or established a number of field depots from which they could operate for certain periods. In small wars, in certain countries, this system may to some extent still

meet our requirements. Modern war, however, of the continental type can no longer be waged on these lines.

In a Boer war, in a war on the North-West Frontier of India, in an East African campaign against von Lettow, hostilities may be dragged out for long periods, as the enemy has little or no essential line of communication, no vital source of supply, which can be interrupted; but in a modern European war the rear organization of a nation in arms is so elaborate and so indispensable that a successful blow at an enemy's maintenance system will yield far quicker and more decisive results than anything known in previous wars. Men and horses can fight for a short time without food or on restricted rations, but the internal combustion engine will not run a yard without fuel.

What brought the German advance in 1914 to a standstill? Maintenance failure—failure to maintain the supply of men, horses, and ammunition, which were available in Germany, but could not be delivered—the German army outran its maintenance possibilities.

What prevented the relief of Kut? Was it not the impossibility at that time of maintaining a sufficiently strong relieving force at the end of an undeveloped line of communication?

The Russian Second Army in 1914 was beaten before it ever reached Tannenberg because it was starved.

What caused the eventual crash of the German nation in arms? Was it the victories of Foch, or the blockade established by the British Navy?

After the Armistice in November, 1918, why did not a victorious allied army advance in its full strength to, and across, the Rhine to dictate terms of peace in Berlin, as the Prussians did in Paris in 1871? Because such an army could not have been maintained during its advance. It was with the utmost difficulty that the force that did go forward was fed until the railway system could be reconstructed behind it.

It is in a consideration of these broad administrative facts that the big lessons of the Great War are to be

found. The problems concern not only the fighting man, but the statesman and the Government, including the Governments of the Dominions. There is no hard and fast line between the soldier's task and the statesman's, nor are the problems confined to the administrative branches alone; the big questions of movement and maintenance are intimately bound up in every military problem, whatever its nature. In consequence we now read in Volume I of our Field Service Regulations:—"The provision at the right time and place of the vast quantities of material of varied natures required by an army in the field and their transport are frequently the deciding factors in the success or failure of its operations." The chief purpose of this book is to examine the broad principles both of movement and maintenance, the observance of which alone makes it possible for an army to carry out the plan of its commander and to give effect to the policy of our Government in time of war.

It has been pointed out above that military administration is not an academic subject to be studied separately from the operational problems of strategy and tactics; on the contrary, it is a first principle of administration that each problem that presents itself must be tackled in the light of its effect on the attainment of the ultimate object. Administration is the servant of tactics and strategy, but such an important servant that it cannot afford to be ignored. "What is the good of issuing orders unless they are feasible? Can the distance be covered within the space of time allotted; will the roads and railways bear the increased weight of traffic demanded? When the troops have reached the desired spots, can they be maintained there in ammunition, food, and clothing?"\* These questions must be considered, but, within the limits of possibility, administration must meet the tactical requirements of each particular case.

Although the interdependence of strategy, tactics,

\* "Tannenberg . . ." Sir Edmund Ironside.

and administration is clear, it is also a principle that there must be a separation between Command and Administration. Command and all it stands for—the higher training and education of troops, plans of campaign, scientific organization and preparation for war: in a word military Art and military Science—would wilt and wither in an atmosphere supercharged with administration. The commander must be relieved of all detail work of an administrative nature. The greater responsibility, therefore, is thrown upon those whose duty it is to carry out the administrative work. Though military operations and military administration must work hand-in-hand, it will sometimes happen that administrative means are not commensurate with strategical and tactical aims. Real knowledge is required of the officer if he is to be in a position to say whether a certain operation is feasible or not on technical administrative grounds. It requires clear thinking, and careful calculations based on the knowledge of capabilities and limitations of units and services, to enable a correct conclusion to be formed.

The next broad principle of military administration is to be found in the division of the subject into its two main branches of movement and maintenance. Though these two are complementary the one to the other, yet in the higher organization of the Army they require separate sub-branches of the staff to deal with them, under the general co-ordinating direction of the Quartermaster-General in the field.

Under the general heading of maintenance come all questions regarding the provision and supply of food, water, ammunition, petrol, and military stores of all kinds, questions of quartering and accommodation, the provision of remounts and the maintenance of material reserves of equipment and stores, problems of salvage and evacuation of stores no longer required by the fighting troops, the repair and upkeep of war matériel, the general welfare of the troops, their messing, institutes, baths, and laundries.

Under the heading of movement all problems of organization and upkeep of transport by road, rail, inland water, sea, or air, and their co-ordination are dealt with; also embarkations, disembarkations, entrainments, and movement of troops by mechanical transport, and the organization of special natures of transport to meet particular conditions of climate or country whenever encountered. Under this head, too, come all the wider questions of transportation which arise in connection with the organization and working of docks through which our fighting troops and their maintenance requirements must pass in war.

When an expeditionary force leaves this country for war, the administrative duties which have to be performed in connection with its movement and maintenance are divided into three zones of responsibility. In so far as these duties are the responsibility of subordinate commanders, in meeting the immediate requirements of units it is the zone of local administration. The next zone is that of general Administration, which is directly controlled by G.H.Q. In this zone through movements of men, animals and stores are dealt with; while in the sphere of maintenance, questions concerning the general reserves of supplies, ammunition, engineer stores, and the larger workshop and repair installations are decided. The administration of docks, bases, railways, and local sea transport, and all questions of transportation are also subjects of general administration. Finally, there is administration by the Army Council, where the broad questions of policy are determined, scales of reserves to be maintained in the various theatres of operations are laid down, and arrangements are made for the bulk provision of all the material needs of the army.

There is no exact line of demarcation between the three zones; the boundary in each case is an elastic one, as co-ordination throughout, especially as regards movement, is essential. But this division of

responsibility is, in a general sense, a first principle of sound military administration.

We find another application of this last principle in the system of administration by areas. Under this system the area occupied by a formation is controlled by the commander of that formation, and he is responsible for all questions of local administration in that area. In conformity with this principle the whole theatre of war is divided into areas and sub-areas for purposes of military administrative control, both on the lines of communication and in the regions occupied by the fighting formations.

During mobile operations the boundaries of these areas may be constantly changing, but care is necessary to ensure that the boundaries are always clearly defined; they must be drawn so as to ensure, as far as possible, that all towns, roads, villages, depots, and all military installations are definitely on one side of them or the other.

Changes in the boundaries of administrative areas are to be avoided as far as possible, as such changes are likely to involve expenditure of labour and money, and they may seriously affect the smooth working of administrative arrangements.

The principles outlined above may be traced throughout the whole system of maintenance and movement of an army in the field. These systems will be examined in the chapters which follow.

## CHAPTER II

### MOVEMENT

#### Section 1. General Principles and Organization of Military Movement.

MOVEMENT is a first principle of war organization, for unless a weapon or a force can be moved it cannot develop its full power. In the realm of strategy movement by sea and railway is a governing factor in the assembly and grouping of armies, and in their maintenance. The use of railways and ships in war admits of rapid changes in the direction of our lines of supply and makes possible the exploitation of the most distant sources for the provision of our essential war matériel. During the Great War twenty-five and a half million tons of stores were shipped to France alone, for the use of the British Expeditionary Force. Correspondingly vast shipments were made to other theatres of operations, and in addition very large quantities of material, such as road stone, coal, and timber, were obtained locally.

The object of this chapter is to examine the broad principles upon which the movement of this enormous mass of materials depends. Men without weapons and food, guns without ammunition, tanks without petrol, are useless encumbrances to an army in the field. It is movement alone that can ensure the correct combination of all these items, whether men or munitions, at the right time and place to bring about the defeat of the enemy.

In the solution of our tactical problems we are taught to consider the combination of fire and movement—the use of fire to produce movement—but this is the fire of guns, machine guns, rifles, and aeroplanes in combination with the movement of the fighting man.