

89. *Ernesettle*.—The suggestion to utilise land at Ernesettle for recreation fields for the Boys' Training Establishment at Devonport was first made by the Berthing Committee in connection with the proposal to move the "Impregnable" Establishment from its present moorings off Cremyll to a position on the East side of the River Tamar above Saltash Bridge (paragraph 29). The site inspected by us comprises an area of about 117 acres, the property of Mr. R. E. Cocks, the purchase price of which, according to the local inquiries made by the Director of Works, might be about 20,000*l.* to 25,000*l.*

90. The following detailed notes on the site follow the sequence of general requirements given in paragraph 80 :—

- (1) The position of the site is about one mile above Saltash Bridge, to the North-west of Plymouth, but in convenient proximity to the Port.
- (2) The Barracks would be close to the River Tamar, which offers exceptional facilities for boat-work in all weathers, but owing to the extensive mud bank, a pier some 500 yards in length would be required, the erection of which would add considerably to the initial cost of the Establishment.
- (3) Transport from the Barracks to the Naval Hospital at Stonehouse would, under favourable conditions, occupy about half-an-hour by steamboat. If, as is probable, the London and South-Western Railway provided a "halt" at Ernesettle, the journey to Devonport Station would occupy about 10 minutes. From a medical point of view the distance from the Hospital is considered a drawback, but not sufficient *per se* to condemn the site as unsuitable. The Industrial Training Ship "Mount Edgecumbe" lying in the stream has a small infectious Cottage Hospital within 150 yards of the south end of the proposed recreation grounds, and in the line of approach to the site from the south. Though this does not constitute an insuperable objection to the site, the proximity of an infectious Hospital is considered undesirable.
- (4) Subject to the provision of a pier and a "halt" at the Barracks on the London and South Western Railway which runs along the western boundary of the site, the means of access to the Establishment would be satisfactory.
- (5) The soil is a pervious shillet, with a few pockets of soft ground due to springs. The proposed site admits of the buildings being erected with a south or south-westerly aspect. The position suggested for the Barracks is on the highest point of the site, north of the recreation grounds. An Establishment at Ernesettle would be completely isolated, being more or less surrounded by War Office property, and there is little probability of the neighbouring town of St. Budeaux extending in this direction.
- (6) There is an extensive area of suitable ground available, but being private property, land would have to be purchased and the price would be high. The area suggested, amounting to 117 acres, would be ample for an establishment of 1,600 boys. The ground proposed as playing fields is reclaimed land below the level of high water. The railway embankment (London and South Western Railway) affords protection against flooding, and the surface water is carried off on a falling tide by means of sluices fitted with valves. The site on inspection after several days' heavy rain was found to be reasonably dry, the artificial drainage by dykes and field drains being fair. Some improvements in drainage would be necessary to render the fields suitable for recreation at all seasons. The ground, being flat, would not require levelling.
- (7) An adequate supply of fresh water can be obtained, the Devonport main running only a short distance from the site.
- (8) } The observations made as regards the site at Trevol apply equally to
- (9) } Ernesettle.

91. The chief objections to the site suggested at Ernesettle are :—

- (a) that it is necessary to purchase the site at a considerable cost.
- (b) that a long pier (500 yards) is required and its erection adds heavily to the cost of providing an Establishment on this site.

The report of the Director of Works is given in Appendix No. 11. The approximate cost of an Establishment at Ernesettle is estimated to be about 250,000*l.*, including the cost of land. The time required for preparing the Establishment would, it is considered, be from 2½ to 3 years.