

how many there are can be stated by the Inspector of Stores) might suffice, if it should be found convenient or desirable to give to Naval corps the 24-pounder garrison guns on iron carriages which are parked at Auckland.

If two of these latter description were given to the Naval corps at the Thames and Port Chalmers and to the Artillery company at Lyttelton, a sufficient number of 6-pounders might be found to equip the Artillery companies with two each, and their 12-pounder howitzers taken into store.

The condition of the Artillery company at Nelson would justify their being put into possession at once of two 6-pounder Armstrongs, one from Auckland and the other from Lyttelton, as the company at the latter place wish to obtain garrison guns.

The Naval Brigade in Auckland have in their charge two 40-pounder Armstrongs, which are in position on the North Head of the Auckland Harbour, and which they wish to retain.

#### ARMS.

By far the larger portion of the Enfield rifles in the hands of Volunteers are worn out. Many of them had been, before issue to Volunteers, in the hands of Militiamen in remote localities, by whom they were used as fowling-pieces, and, upon being taken into store, were cleaned, browned, &c., and re-issued to Volunteers, apparently new, but absolutely worthless.

The Terry breech-loading carbines in the hands of certain Cavalry and Cadet corps are in a worse condition, and are positively dangerous.

Of the Cadet carbines, I believe there is a sufficient supply on hand to arm existing corps, for at present some corps are armed with Terry carbines and others with old-pattern sergeants' fusils, so that in firing for prizes all Cadets are not on the same footing.

#### ACCOUTREMENTS

Now in charge of Volunteer Infantry companies are of an obsolete pattern. A neat black or patent leather waist-belt, with hook-and-eye clasps, ball bag, frog for sword bayonet, and rifle sling, are all that are necessary in the shape of accoutrements. Many corps would like to be permitted to wear a shoulder-belt, with small pouch attached; but these might be provided by the corps which desire to wear them at their own expense, and so become corps property.

The clothing or uniform of Volunteers, not being Government property, is not under Government control, excepting in so far as the colour of material and pattern is concerned. It would be very difficult, notwithstanding the stringent orders contained in the Volunteer Regulations, to find in the whole colony two companies dressed alike; and this diversity is fatal to uniformity, particularly when any large number of Volunteers are massed for drill. Many corps have chosen gray Nelson cloth as their material—not, I think, because it is the prescribed cloth, nor because of its supposed suitability for serviceable uniform, but chiefly, I think, because of the facility with which it is obtained from the Government, viz. at a very moderate cost, and payment is not required until the close of the Volunteer year in which it is drawn from store.

My own impression is that this cloth is unsuitable for uniform: the material is good, but it is capable in the hands of the tailor of being trimmed out in every possible shade; and I have myself seen tunics constructed of this cloth of three different shades in the same tunic, arising from each piece probably having been shrunk in water of as many degrees of cleanliness or purity.

With respect to the manufacture of the uniform in wear, much of it is execrably cut, and very many tailors are quite unable to make a suit which will fit comfortably and closely at the same time. I have seen some corps whose uniform was made as if by small children in a girl's school.

The foraging cap is another article of dress which is almost impossible to have made in a smart or proper manner, the effort of the manufacturer being evidently to turn out a French cap or kepi, in which he signally fails. He also usually supplies with this cap a chinstrap, of sufficient length to reach only to the nose or mouth of the wearer, who, in order to secure his cap to his head, is obliged to pass the strap round the back of the head, after the manner of another branch of the colonial service.

I think Volunteers should be neatly and smartly dressed, but uniformity should be insisted upon, and the general colour should, I consider, be rifle green—a colour worn by most Rifle corps in England, as well as by the Rifle Brigade and 60th Rifles of the Imperial service. The material should be ordered by the Government from England, and issued on payment from store; and pattern tunic, cap, and trousers should be sealed by the Government, and kept for inspection and guidance in the Volunteer Office of each district—each corps to have its own facings, and some distinguishing device embroidered on the shoulder-strap. Distinguishing corps badges might also be allowed on the forage cap.

I am able to transmit herewith patterns of the material I recommend for clothing, ranging in price from 3s. per yard, 27 inches wide, for a very serviceable tartan (otherwise serge), to 13s. 6d. for the finest cloth of 56 inches wide—all of rifle green colour.

Of all these, the tartan kersey, at 3s. 9d. per yard, is the one, I believe, would be selected as of the most suitable and serviceable quality. These patterns have been procured from a military outfitter in England by Captain Derrom, Victoria Rifle Company.

Artillery, Cavalry, Scottish, and Naval companies might be allowed their distinctive uniform if they desire it; but with these exceptions, I think all other corps, including Engineers, should be made to adopt a similar uniform.

#### OBSERVATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS.

To these I proceed with some diffidence, in consequence of my having been instructed in your letter, No. 349, of 6th November last, that my duty as Inspector was simply to report upon corps as I found them; and I also discovered, not without some regret, that an intimation had been made to the Officer Commanding in Otago, from the Defence Officer, that my duty went so far, and no further.

But I think a report of this description would be considered very defective were I not permitted to some extent to submit my views and opinions on general matters affecting the force, not exactly