

No. 16.

Major COOPER, Shortland, to the UNDER SECRETARY for DEFENCE, Wellington.

SIR,—

Militia and Volunteer Office, Shortland, 3rd June, 1874.

In order to comply with the instructions of the Hon. Dr. Pollen, conveyed to me in your letter No. 201, I forwarded to Captain Lipsey certain questions bearing on Major Gordon's letter, which I now transmit to you, with the purport of his answers, and have the honor to make the following remarks on Major Gordon's report of his inspection of No. 1 H.R.V., for the information of the Hon. the Native and Defence Minister:—

1. Volunteer or Acting Quartermaster-Sergeant Bell, as recommended elsewhere, should be dismissed the service for being drunk at the inspection parade, and for his subsequent conduct.

2. I can hardly understand how the majority of the members of No. 1 H.R.V. then present on parade drilled so badly, as half the number present have been in either the imperial or colonial services, or had been efficient Volunteers before joining at the Thames, and, with two exceptions, the others had been for a considerable time Volunteers. Lieutenant Quinton, who resigned his first commission, and has had little drill since his re-election, probably put the men out, and thereby annoyed them, so that they could not or would not drill afterwards.

3. Captain Lipsey appears to have improperly explained himself to Major Gordon. If annoyed, he is apt to get confused. He now explains that he only intended to inform Major Gordon that some of the absentees who were at Waikato in the Engineer Volunteer Militia, some of whom had earned capitulation allowance previous to leaving for Waikato, were allowed to remain on the books of the Thames companies, as many of them will return to the Thames; and I considered they could get leave from their own corps and drill with the Waikato companies, as Auckland Volunteers have often done at the Thames, and Thames Volunteers at Auckland or elsewhere.

4. Captain Lipsey appears, from his answer, to have understood my order for the Volunteers to parade on Sunday, as an order for Volunteers only who desired to attend church to muster at the parade ground. My orders relative to church parades have usually been of this nature, but the order for the inspection parade was a positive order, which Captain Lipsey should have obeyed, and he deserves a reprimand for not having attended.

5. Captain Lipsey should also be reprimanded for calling in the arms of his company without the authority of His Excellency the Governor; but, according to his statement, he did so from good motives.

6. Captain Lipsey's answer to my question relative to the men on parade being all recruits, makes it appear, either that he did not express himself correctly, or that he was not understood by Major Gordon.

7. Volunteer Plant was an efficient Volunteer for 1871-72 and 1872-73, and received clothing, but last year he did not attend parade, and no claim has been made for 1873-74. With regard to Volunteer Woon, he was some time in Captain Lipsey's company, and was credited with a number of parades he had attended with Captain Morrow's company before joining No. 1. H.R.V. in 1872, and it is evident that Captain Morrow was under the impression that Woon had been transferred to No. 1. H.R.V., otherwise he would not have asked Captain Lipsey to transfer him again to the Auckland Company, as his letter shows he did.

In conclusion, I have the honor to make the following remarks on the whole question:—I venture to recommend that, as Captain Lipsey now expresses regret for what took place at the inspection, and as he has generally been an active officer, and for a considerable time regularly paraded more men at monthly inspections and weekly drills than is generally the case with Volunteer corps, that he shall be allowed to resign his commission, should His Excellency the Governor not be advised to disband the corps, as I have already recommended, and that Lieutenant Quinton and Volunteer Bell should be dismissed the service, the former for allowing himself to occupy the chair at a meeting of certain members of the corps, who made comments on Major Gordon's conduct as Inspecting Officer, and the latter for having been drunk on parade, and also for having taken part in and signed the minutes of said meeting. And further, should the corps be disbanded, that the other members be allowed to join No. 3 H.R.V., or other Thames corps who are below the maximum strength, such corps to be allowed to furnish supplementary capitulation rolls for such members of the No. 1 H.R.V. as have become entitled to the grant for the Volunteer year 1873-74.

I have, &c.,

I. R. COOPER, Major,
Commanding Thames District.

The Acting Under Secretary, Wellington.

Enclosure in No. 16.

QUESTIONS forwarded to Captain LIPSEY by Major COOPER, and ANSWERS given to them by the former Officer.

1. Why did Captain Lipsey allow Acting Quartermaster-Sergeant Bell to remain on parade in a state of drunkenness; and why did he not report the circumstance to Major Cooper, as directed by the Inspecting Officer?—Captain Lipsey did not place Sergeant Bell under arrest because Major Gordon had taken over the command of the parade before Acting Quartermaster-Sergeant Bell fell in. Captain Lipsey was suspended, and ordered not to interfere in company matters, by Major Gordon; therefore he did not report the circumstance of Sergeant Bell's misconduct till called on by Major Cooper to explain his reasons for not having done so.

2. To what cause does Captain Lipsey attribute the men of his company present on parade not being able to go through the rudimentary drill?—Captain Lipsey considers the men lost confidence in themselves, and failed to drill as well as usual, owing to Major Gordon's severe comments on any blunders they made; also, two recruits in the ranks probably put the others out.

3. Did Major Gordon understand Captain Lipsey correctly to have said, "that thirty of his men were at Waikato in the Engineer Volunteer Militia"?—Captain Lipsey intended Major Gordon to