

It is in contemplation to form the Artillery Force into a battalion, with companies or detachments at the several stations. The advantage of this organization will be found in increasing the *esprit de corps*, and in bringing about uniformity in drill, dress, and system. The powerful and valuable arms which will be intrusted to the Artillery Volunteers will require great application to attain proficiency in their use; and, as the Artillery Volunteers will necessarily have much more work to do, and greater responsibility, it would be desirable to raise their capitation allowance, after the new arms arrive, by 20s. per annum.

The Naval Volunteers at many of the ports are not of much less importance to the colony. They are at almost all places desirous of obtaining guns, and anxious to learn their use. When the new arms arrive, it will be seen how far the Government can meet their wishes by transferring to them some of the guns now on issue to the artillery. Where the Naval Volunteers are intrusted with guns, it is proposed to raise their capitation to the same rate as the artillery.

The Cavalry Volunteers in the North Island undoubtedly perform valuable service to the colony at present; for, as they can be readily moved to considerable distances without much expense or preparation, they might be relied upon to reinforce the Armed Constabulary and local Militia at any point where disturbances arose. This enables the Government to provide for public security with a less permanently paid force than would otherwise be required.

The Waikato Cavalry, on the extreme frontier, is a case in point. If that corps did not exist, it would be necessary to increase very largely the Constabulary Force whenever any disturbance was apprehended. For many years the Waikato Cavalry Volunteers have maintained a high state of efficiency, and have been ready to move at a moment's notice to any point that might be considered in danger. The fact that such a corps existed has given confidence to settlers, and proportionately influenced the disaffected Natives. It has been necessary to treat this fine corps exceptionally, and during the past drill season an allowance has been given to all the force for the days actually spent in drilling—twelve in all during the year. With the prospect of peaceful relations with the Maori race, it is possible this outlay may prove unnecessary hereafter; but, in the meantime, it is an expenditure which is at once an encouragement and a true economy.

To insure uniformity of system and the proper care of arms, together with efficiency, it is proposed to appoint an Inspector of Volunteers, at a salary of £250 per annum. This office has always existed until very recently, and it appears absolutely necessary to revert to the former custom, if the Volunteer Force is to be at all properly managed.

A proposition is on foot in the Volunteer Force, to which it seems desirable to afford every practicable assistance. It is proposed to form a rifle association on the basis of that existing in England, with an annual meeting like that at Wimbledon. At present it seems probable that, if the Government will furnish the plant necessary, and the use from time to time of suitable grounds, at places selected for holding the meetings of the association, there will be no lack of subscribers to the fund; and that a Government *pro rata* subsidy would produce a fund large enough to insure a very satisfactory meeting every year.

As in everything connected with the Volunteer Force, however, the Government can only aid and perhaps direct to some extent, but cannot compel any organization, unless therefore the force itself takes up this proposal with a certain amount of unanimity, it cannot be rendered successful.

In conclusion, the total arms on issue and in store in the colony, and the total ordnance now here and expected, is shown on the accompanying tables; as also the corps already disbanded, and those below the minimum, and the total numbers at the present time.

I cannot close this report without making favourable mention of the Native Volunteer Corps at the Thames under Captain Taipari, which I had the opportunity of inspecting when in attendance on your Excellency during the autumn. This body of men is in no way inferior in drill or discipline to European Volunteers, and the men have shown great aptitude in acquiring proficiency in their arms. A second corps of loyal Natives has recently been formed, and when it has acquired the necessary preliminary training it will be placed on the same footing as the Thames corps. In relation to this subject, I may mention that I received offers on the part of a considerable body of Natives to enrol themselves for service at the Cape during the recent disturbances; and again during the excitement in connection with the threatened war with Russia, an offer of service of a whole regiment was received from the Natives.

Small Arms and Ammunition.

Rifles, &c.—

Sniders (all sizes)—On issue	...	...	...	...	...	5,023
In store	...	...	...	...	...	680
Expected from England	...	...	...	...	...	1,400
Enfields—In store	...	...	...	...	...	10,445

Ammunition—

Snider—In store	...	...	...	...	...	1,372,924
Enfield—In store	...	...	...	...	...	752,541