

Formation of
reserve from
armed con-
stabulary.

I understand that it is intended to fill the ranks of the police force of the colony from men who have served in the armed constabulary. If, while serving in the police, the military training of the men were kept up—an arrangement not attended with much difficulty—it is obvious that a reserve would be created which, in time of war, would furnish a most valuable nucleus of trained men of the highest class for the volunteer field forces. But it would be possible to go further, and to throw open to the armed constabulary employment in all departments of the State, on condition that the non-commissioned officers and men agreed to serve in a reserve for a term of years, and be liable to be called out in time of war.

In Victoria the foot police has, for many years, been recruited from a corps of paid artillery maintained for defence purposes.

By such inducements a superior class of men would be attracted to the ranks of a force organized on the proposed model. They would be content to serve for small pay in consideration of the chances of obtaining permanent and well-paid appointments under the Government, as a reward for efficient service and good conduct. At the same time, the evils would be avoided which inevitably result from the maintenance of armed bodies of men in time of peace, with insufficient employment and indifferent prospects of advancement.

Under such a system the defensive power of the country would be increased year by year, and there would be absolute security that a small, but thoroughly trained, force would be immediately available when it was wanted.

Description of
field forces.

In the absence of this reserve of trained men, a volunteer force will have to be relied upon, of sufficient strength at each place, to repel such an attack as is likely to be made by one or two cruisers landing from 200 to 300 men. For this purpose a field force of 500 men should be maintained—at Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch, and Dunedin*—comprising 30 mounted men, 70 field artillery, and a battalion of infantry 400 strong. In time of peace, the infantry might be reduced to 250 men.

In this manner a compact body of men would be provided at each of the principal harbors, with a definite sphere of action. The battery at the entrance to the port being secure from capture—owing to its being enclosed and self-defensible by its garrison—the field force would be free to act to the best advantage in repelling an attack by land.

Mounted
men.

The mounted detachment might be designated “Mounted Rifles,” a description of force better suited to the work required of them than cavalry. The officers and men should be good horsemen, and expert in the use of the sword and rifle. They should be trained especially with the view of acting in time of war as scouts, escorts, and orderlies. Reconnoitring and the conveyance of accurate intelligence should be carefully practised.

Field
artillery.

The field artillery should be taught such movements as are likely to be required on service. The men should be armed with carbines, and properly instructed in their use, in order not to be

* At Port Chalmers an extra company of infantry, 50 strong, should be maintained.