

put through a course of battery drill and practice, and instructed in the mounting and use of the new 6in. disappearing-carriage Elswick guns, of which the two first had just been mounted at this port, under Lieut.-Colonel Boddam's superintendence.

The Volunteer force as a whole has made great progress, and has practised and learned most of the movements and tactical evolutions of the organization created last year. It has been taught the theory of military tactics, as applied to any civilized warfare conceivable in this country. The general average rifle-shooting has been more attended to, and is much improved. Elementary field fortification, such as might be of use in case of an attempted and unexpected landing of the enemy, has been practically taught to many commissioned and non-commissioned officers and Engineer Volunteers throughout the colony, and at a recent examination all the officers who had had opportunities of study or instruction passed a very creditable examination, and several a brilliant one. The clothing of the force, and its equipments, are much more uniform than last year, and, although the latter still to a large extent consist of stores, then half worn out, handed over to us twenty-three years ago by the Imperial Government, a beginning has been made in the replacement of the worst of the belts and pouches, which were very bad. Here I may remark that in 1885 the colony had for more than twenty years neglected the proper equipment of the local forces, and that we have even now no reserve of arms or military stores. Although out of the Volunteer vote you have purchased as much as it would bear in this direction during the last two years, we still have only pouches for at most twenty rounds of ball cartridge—a quantity utterly inadequate except for parade purposes; and, although the belts of the force have been partially replaced by new ones where absolutely worn out, still there are many patterns and many belts which are barely serviceable, and very unsightly. You have ordered for this year more belts, together with pouches; so that, when received, five thousand men will have good belts, and will be enabled to carry sixty rounds of ball cartridge each—forty rounds less than is now required for breech-loading arms; but this is hardly sufficient, and in future years, if peace continues, or at once, if war is declared, a further provision must be made for, at least, the Permanent Militia and existing Volunteer force when raised to a war footing, as well as some reserve in case the Militia is ever called out. With regard to small arms, the uncertainty of the Home Government as to the proper arm, the condemnation successively of the Martini-Henry and Martini-Enfield, and the general recognition of the necessity of adopting a repeating rifle, has prevented your importing any new description of arm for our Volunteers till the question is settled of the best arm for the service. Meanwhile 3,000 more Sniders have been ordered, of which 1,500 have arrived, to replace worn-out arms now in the possession of the Volunteer force. But as soon as the improved repeating arm is definitely adopted you have decided, if possible, to order 2,500 to be sent out.

The two batteries of nine-pounder breech-loading field-guns ordered last year are at present in course of shipment in England. When they arrive the regiment of Volunteer Artillery will have nearly half its proper complement of guns and limbers, without ammunition wagons, which, however, can be dispensed with, and ordinary carts or expresses utilized instead, fitted with spare boxes for ammunition to fit the limbers, and such boxes can be made in the colony.

The absolute emptiness of the colonial magazines two years ago, the entire want even of small-arm ammunition, and unserviceable description and insufficient supply of the equipments in use have prevented the department from obtaining almost any of the more modern military material it should possess. Noticeably, we have not been able to equip as we should our Naval Brigades, even at the four ports, with proper machine guns or launches—rendering the duty of guarding our mine fields not only one of danger, but one that cannot be efficiently carried out without the always extravagant course of hiring or buying boats during a scare, hurriedly adapting them for the work by temporary expedients, and giving them arms not intended for such a purpose. We are very short of tents, although you have, in these two years, imported 400 of the 600 we possess. These have been much on issue, but have been well cared for, stored, and repaired by Captain Anderson, so they may be regarded as serviceable still. The life of a tent is, however, limited, and not only have we less than quarter the full tentage of the existing force (all of which, of course, could never be required), but it will be necessary to continue replacing tents as they become unserviceable.

There are also other military stores with which, though required in the event of war, we are entirely unsupplied. The requisites for proper ambulance, signalling by heliograph or lime light, field electrical telegraph, and tools for entrenchment are supplied to the colonial forces in other colonies; and (although many of the medical officers have, at their own expense, formed small ambulances and purchased appliances, and some material has been procured by each Volunteer Engineer Company, while signalling lamps and flags have been bought by many Volunteer corps) the actual supply is very far short of what is required.

As regards education, this branch is under the superintendence of Lieut.-Colonel Bailey, the President of the Council, which at present consists only of himself, Captain Coleman, and, to such an extent as his time permits, Lieut.-Colonel Boddam, with Lieutenant Douglas, R.N., for secretary. The work these officers have done during the past six months, including musketry, has been very considerable, and it has been most efficiently performed. I enclose Lieut.-Colonel Bailey's report upon the subject.

I cannot conclude this report on the general subject of the colonial forces under my command without drawing your attention to the fact that we are behind almost every civilized colony or country in our arms. I will not add to what I have said before on so many occasions and in so many capacities during the past years as regards our artillery guns. They are not now so wholly insufficient as they were, and the arm, though an old one and of many calibres, is still a useful and accurate one. But as regards our small arms we have only the Snider, a useful weapon in principle, and up to three or four hundred yards a reliable one, when in good order. But there is a limit to the duration of the best grooved rifle, and ours are all of old pattern, some very long in use, and quite 20 per cent. are more or less worn out in the extractors and grooves. As against