

1890.
NEW ZEALAND.

THE MILITARY FORCES AND DEFENCES OF NEW ZEALAND

(REPORT ON, BY MAJOR-GENERAL EDWARDS.)

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

From Major-General J. BEVAN EDWARDS, C.B., Commanding the Troops in China and Hongkong, to His Excellency the EARL of ONSLOW, G.C.M.G., Governor and Commander-in-Chief of New Zealand.

Wellington, New Zealand, 9th November, 1889.

MY LORD,

In accordance with the instructions contained in War Office letter of the 3rd June, 1889, I have the honour to forward, for the information of your Government, the following report on the military forces and defences of New Zealand.

The question of the defence of New Zealand, differs from that of the neighbouring Australian Colonies, on account of the greater extent of its coast-line, the numerous harbours, and the difficulties of communication; and if an enemy succeeded in establishing himself in any part of the colony it would be almost impossible to combine the local forces to operate against him. This difficulty will, however, gradually disappear as the railway system is developed, and communication opened up between Wellington and Auckland in the North Island, and between the east and west coasts of the South Island. As it will be impossible to prevent an enemy from landing at many points in the colony, its defence will be best secured by the formation of reliable field forces at the four great centres of population—Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch, and Dunedin. Major-General Schaw, C.B., has lately made exhaustive reports on the works for the defence of the harbours, and for the general defence of the colony, and I concur in his recommendations, with the exception that the field forces proposed for the four centres, are not organized so as to allow of sufficient expansion in time of war. These reports were, however, drawn up at a time of great financial depression, and framed to reduce expenditure to its lowest limits.

The forces generally, have not sufficient training to man the works for the defence of the harbours, nor is there any organization by means of which field forces could be created to protect the four centres. The material is all that ^{forces} generally.