

and knowledge of their work displayed by the gunners and torpedo-men in charge of the court. The arrangement of the submarine-mining display was undertaken by Captain Falconer, as was also the lighting of the fernery and grounds by electricity, with one of our service dynamos. This merits special remark, as it was not only a novel departure from the usual routine, but also because during the whole period of the Exhibition the light was run without hitch or hindrance, proving conclusively that the training of officers and men of the Torpedo Corps in this portion of their duties has been both practical and successful. The planning of the court and the execution of the heavy work in connection with the mounting of the 6in. B.L. and 64-pounder M.L. gun, engine, and boiler for dynamo, &c., was undertaken by Mr. Bell, Engineer for Defences, with his usual ability, and successfully carried out by his able assistant, Mr. Watson, in charge of the district defence-works.

Conduct.—The conduct of the men of both branches of the Force has been, with one or two exceptions, excellent.

Volunteers.—Although there was a slight increase (34) in the numerical strength of the Volunteer Force on the 31st December, 1889, as compared with 1888—notwithstanding the disbandment or conversion into rifle-clubs during the year of no fewer than 17 corps—the fact that, out of 7,651 men returned on the rolls, only 5,779 earned capitation, does not admit of the results for the year being deemed very satisfactory.

On examination of the capitation-rolls it is found that this large proportion of non-efficients is mainly due to absence from daylight drills or practices.

As a rule, Volunteers turn out readily at night, and in such instruction as can be given in drill-sheds fair progress is made; but, unfortunately, this is not all that is required, as the military training of the present day necessitates an amount of practice by daylight for which Volunteers either will not give up their time or are unable to afford to do so for the rate of capitation now paid.

The attack-formation, laying of guns and mines, artillery and musketry practices are essentially subjects to which the above remarks apply, and, as they represent the cardinal points of a soldier's training, it is evident they should be carried out under such conditions as to permit the full benefit of the instruction imparted being obtained; this can only be successfully accomplished by frequent and continuous daylight drills. At present, in many districts, the daylight parades provided for by regulations are held at an unearthly hour in the morning; a hurried drill is gone through, to which little attention is paid owing to the anxiety in the minds of those present as to whether they will be dismissed in time to permit them to get to their daily work at the usual hour; and thus, while the required number of daylight parades are attended, the amount of actual training and instruction received by officers and men is of little moment.

There appears to be a general consensus of opinion that adequate compensation is not awarded to the Volunteer for services rendered, and that until this is done a well-trained and disciplined force will not be obtained. The recognition of this fact in neighbouring colonies has led to the adoption of the partially-paid system, as advocated by Lieutenant-Colonel Hume in his report of last year, and recommended by Major-General Edwards, C.B., R.E., who was much impressed by the success of the system when inspecting the forces of the Australasian Colonies. As this scheme has now been in force there for some years, with satisfactory results, there is little reason to doubt its success if established here.

While the regulations in force are, according to the general opinion of some of our best Volunteer officers, perfectly adapted to our present organization, the want of their uniform administration has much to do with the variable degrees of efficiency found in the several districts. The Queen's Regulations and Standing Orders of Her Majesty's army and of other services are accepted *sine dubio* as the laws which govern; but this is not so with the Forces in this colony, and it is almost a daily occurrence to receive from officers of the Force applications (too often recommended by their superiors) which, if concurred in, would render the regulations inoperative, and land the departmental administration in a chaos it would be impossible to cope with.

Although several of the smaller districts have of late years been absorbed into the larger ones, there are still thirteen districts in existence, commanded by as many officers; and it is to this excessive number, and to the different degrees of administrative power, that I attribute the want of uniformity at present existing, which is fatal to all recognised lines of military discipline and efficiency. I feel confident that if the districts were limited to one-fourth of the number, and the regulations more rigidly adhered to both in letter and spirit, a corresponding improvement would be the result.

I pointed out in my report of last year that one of the most important changes in the regulations dealt with Naval and Garrison Artillery corps, and provided for their training in the special work assigned to them; but I regret to state that my anticipations have been far from fulfilled, and that in no instance has full advantage been taken of the liberal instruction afforded, the opportunities for which, on every conceivable occasion, were made subject to the convenience and, I might even add, the whims of the corps.

Out of a strength of 951 at the four centres the following number of Naval Volunteers were passed as efficient in submarine-mining and artillery work, and received the extra £1 and badge of efficiency:—

					Strength.	Efficients.		
						Submarine-mining.		Heavy-gun drill.
Auckland	...	...	...	...	321	24	...	0
Wellington	...	...	...	...	212	46	...	0*
Dunedin	...	...	...	...	278	0	...	1
Lyttelton	...	...	...	...	140	0	...	0

* Examination of Petone Navals not completed.