

doubtedly country corps that are perfectly useless, on account of the isolation of their headquarters, and all such should be compelled to turn into rifle-clubs. These rifle-clubs should be encouraged in every possible way by the department; and, to insure proper and uniform instruction in the rudiments of musketry, the shooting should, wherever practicable, be superintended by a member of the district staff.

6. *Equipment*.—I am glad to be able to report a marked improvement in the equipment generally, and many corps have supplied themselves with greatcoats during the year, the want of which has been much felt on different occasions. The time has now arrived when all corps should be compelled to equip themselves with a serviceable undress uniform, boots, greatcoats, leggings, haversacks, and water-bottles. Many of the boots now worn on parade are quite unserviceable for a long march or for swampy ground. As soon as the Lee-Mitford rifles are issued, a conclusion should be come to as to what pouch-accommodation will be required, and the corps provided as soon as possible with this the most important of accoutrements. It will be probably found that less pouch-accommodation will be necessary than has heretofore been in use.

7. *Medical Officers*.—Several medical officers were absent from the inspection parades, and, in many instances, the absence was probably due to their having no uniform to appear in on parade. If the matter is looked into, and Officers Commanding Districts called upon to furnish particulars, it will be found that some surgeons, though they have held commissions for years, have never provided themselves with uniforms, attended a parade, or performed any duty, good, bad, or indifferent. These gentlemen's names should not be retained on the rolls of their corps. Others, it is satisfactory to find, have attended parades regularly, and taken considerable pains in instructing their men in ambulance duty; but they complain that their efforts are not recognised as they should be by the department, nor can they obtain the necessary materials and appliances for carrying their instruction to a serviceable point.

8. *Battalions*.—That battalions will sooner or later form part of the organization, at the four centres at least, is beyond a doubt, but they must be built upon a very different structure from those recently disbanded. Each corps composing a battalion must sink entirely its individuality, and become one of the companies of the regiment, irrespective of who is in command, or who or what the company's officers may be. Promotions must go through the battalion not by companies, and enrolments must be for the battalion only. Each company must have its proper compliment of signallers; and a thoroughly-trained and efficient ambulance corps, with the necessary equipment, should be formed from the bandsmen of the battalion.

9. *Capitation*.—The system of giving the same amount of capitation to all branches of the service appears to be unfair towards the mounted branches and Artillery, who have to meet numerous expenses not incurred by the Infantry, and the former should therefore be more liberally treated in the matter of capitation than the latter. The £2 per head given last year was an increase on the former year, but is insufficient for corps that conscientiously carry out the regulations as regards drill and equipment. There are corps, however, whose object appears to be to do as little as possible towards efficiency and equipment, merely seeking to obtain capitation either by fair means or foul. It will be readily admitted that £2 per head per annum is insufficient to keep a corps of proper strength fully equipped; but, in reference to some corps, the question may be asked, What return do the Government get for its outlay of £2 per head? And the honest reply should often be, Nothing but inefficiency, and a paper corps in reality non-existent. I must repeat what I said last year, and what, I am proud to say, Major-General Edwards fully confirms—viz., that what we in New Zealand require is a "partially-paid" Force, whereby the Volunteer is converted into a military citizen, and each individual is placed under contract to render certain services in return for a certain pecuniary solatium, receiving pay in exact proportion to the rank attained and the service rendered. Volunteering rises and falls spasmodically. No doubt if there was a war-scare again we should see large numbers flocking to the ranks, even under present regulations and circumstances, to evade Militia duty; but as soon as the war-clouds cleared away so would the martial ardour, and there would never be a lasting efficient Force capable of defending the colony. The partially-paid system, if only extended to the number of Volunteers actually required on a peace footing, and thereby establishing the nucleus of a system capable of expansion to a war footing on the shortest possible notice, would, while proving little more expensive than our present Volunteer organization, be thoroughly efficient as far as it went. Officers are required who are not, by reason of their election, under an obligation to the rank and file, but those who are considered by persons best able to judge likely to win respect and obedience, and who have shown some adaptability to command and to enforce and maintain discipline.

10. *Arms and Accoutrements*.—The guns and carriages on issue to the field batteries of artillery are about worn out, and should be replaced by light field-guns of modern type. The rifles and accoutrements on issue to the corps are well kept and serviceable, but a Magazine rifle is much needed to keep pace with the present army infantry equipment. No time, as yet, in this matter, however, appears to have been wasted, as, if the order sent some time since for Martini-Henry rifles had been complied with, the colony would now have been saddled with a number of arms quite unsuitable for the Volunteers. Magazine rifles, it is well known, are the weapons adopted by common consent of all European nations as the infantry arm of the present day. There are numberless different patterns, and the one adopted in the English army is the Lee-Mitford, which is said to carry reduction of calibre to an extreme point, and to enable the soldier to fire from six to nine shots at a critical moment without reloading. Reduction of calibre permits of an increased effective range, and allows of the Volunteer carrying a larger number of rounds. This alone is a substantial gain; and it is probable that the difficult question of how to supply ammunition in the field has been practically solved by the adoption of the small-bore rifle. It appears to me that one of the most important points to be looked to at the present time is to obtain suitable ground for rifle-ranges in the vicinity of the towns. When it is remembered that