

the new rifle sighted up to 2,800 yards for ordinary black powder with a smokeless nitro compound would carry 3,500 yards some idea may be formed of the extent of rifle-ranges that will be required in the immediate future. Great care must be exercised in training officers, non-commissioned officers, and men in order that full value may be got out of the new arm; and, further, we must educate our Volunteers to the intelligent use of the rifle under all the conditions of modern warfare. It is hoped that a short time will see the whole of the Forces armed with the Lee-Mitford rifles. Every improvement in weapons demands a yet greater improvement in training, which must be of a thoroughly practical kind, and not of the sort that has hitherto, in too many cases, furnished merely pretty tabular statements of perfunctory and useless averages.

11. *Shooting*.—It is satisfactory to be able to report that there is again, on the whole, a decided improvement in the shooting this last year, notwithstanding that the arms in use are getting annually worse and worse from wear-and-tear. The Auckland ammunition, manufactured by Messrs. Whitney and Co., is giving more satisfaction and becoming more popular than formerly. I have witnessed a good many experiments with this colonial ammunition, and have no hesitation in pronouncing it better than much of what was imported and until recently on issue in this colony. The Whitney ammunition appears to make greater penetration with less fouling and more equal shooting than the imported ammunition. I am inclined to think that a certain amount of harm to musketry, and certainly to discipline, accrues from the New Zealand Rifle Association meetings as now carried out each year. Last year the Martini-Henry rifles were used, a weapon that will never be adopted in this colony, and will soon be obsolete with the European portion of the Imperial army; and teaching our Volunteers the use of it cannot possibly benefit the service, while the expense even for its use at this annual meeting is considerable, and adds one more to the already too miscellaneous stock of arms and ammunition in use in the colony. A novel and most undesirable practice was introduced at the Association meeting last year of allowing Volunteers to shoot in plain clothes should they desire to do so. This, with the unseemly disputes that took place between officers in the sight and hearing of the rank and file, were subversive of discipline, and anything but reputable to all concerned. It is noticeable at Easter encampments that the most slovenly men are those that have a short time previously been attending the Association meeting; and if reproved for such faults as not saluting or being dressed partly in uniform and partly in mufti their reply invariably is, "We were allowed to do so at the shooting camp." It is a popular delusion to suppose that the Association meetings tend to bring recruits to the Force. This is not the case. The pot-hunter—a very undesirable class of Volunteer—may join for the purpose of making money at these meetings; but directly he fails in doing so he quits the Volunteers, and merely cries down their credit whenever he gets a chance of doing so. The week's or fortnight's camp at the Wimbledon meetings does the attendants an immense amount of good, and is as serviceable to them as a week's training at Aldershot or elsewhere, strict discipline being fully maintained; and if the annual meeting is to be continued in New Zealand the Government should insist upon nominating the discipline officers, and the Association be made to carry out their shooting-programme with their own officers, under the immediate command of the Government nominees.

12. *Inspections during Year*.—As previously stated, the inspections at the four centres were made by Major-General J. B. Edwards, C.B., R.E., those at Auckland and Wellington being night inspections in the drill-sheds, while those at Christchurch and Dunedin were early in the morning and a Saturday afternoon respectively. In Auckland the Major-General made a daylight inspection of the South Frankland Mounted Rifles, under the command of Captain Harris, in the grounds adjoining Government House, when 41 of all ranks were present out of a total strength of 61. The troop was well turned out, and executed various movements to the satisfaction of the Inspecting Officer, who complimented Captain Harrison on the horses, and general appearance of the corps. At Christchurch, after the usual salute and march past, a few brigade movements, including the attack formation, were practised. The Canterbury Mounted Rifles, under Captain Reese, with a total of 35 of all ranks, showed a marked improvement since the previous inspection, their skirmishing being particularly steady, and eliciting praise from the Major-General. The E Battery, under Captain Martin, with a strength of 41 of all ranks, and four guns horsed, looked particularly smart, and drilled very steadily. The Richmond Rifles, under Captain Bowron, had a total strength of 87 men on parade; while the Kaiapoi Rifles, under Lieutenant Wilson, had a total strength of 71 on parade. The four companies of the Christchurch Queen's Cadets, with their drum-and-fife band, were present at the parade with the adult corps; and I am glad to be able to report that these companies have made good progress in drill and efficiency during the past year; there were, however, a large number of the boys absent, the muster being only a total of all ranks of 166 out of a strength of 302. The Christ College Cadets and Christchurch High School Cadets were, I am sorry to say, for some unexplained reason, absent from this general parade; but I took an opportunity of inspecting them on a later date, and was pleased to find considerable improvement in both corps. After the general parade the Major-General was pleased to express himself satisfied with what he had seen, but made severe comments on the large number of absentees. At Dunedin, in the early morning, Major-General Edwards inspected the Dunedin Hussars, and the North Otago Hussars from Oamaru, on the Forbury Racecourse, the two corps being under canvas at the time in Tahuna Park for their annual week's training. The Inspecting Officer was much struck with the superior class of horses in the ranks of both these troops, as well as with the general appearance and physique of the men, and was pleased to express himself well pleased with their riding and drill. The absentees from the two troops amounted to 25 in all. I may here mention that the colony is fortunate in possessing such a competent and painstaking Cavalry Instructor as Captain Coleman, who by his tact, zeal, and ability makes the annual week's training a reality instead of a sham. In the afternoon the whole of the troops composing the Otago District were inspected on the Forbury Racecourse, and, after the usual salute and march past, were put through several brigade movements, including the attack formation, by Lieut.-Colonel Wales. This latter movement was anything but well executed; but the presence of so many country corps, who had