

never seen it before, to a great extent accounts for some of the mistakes. The Inspecting Officer was specially pleased with the B Battery of Artillery, which, under Captain Proudfoot, manœuvred separately in a very creditable manner. The Inspecting Officer was also pleased with the three batteries of Naval Artillery present. Here, as at Christchurch, the Major-General remarked on the large number of absentees.

13. *Musters*.—The absentees at the four centres were as follows:—

			Absentees.	Strength.	Percentage.
Auckland	...	...	295	923	31·9
Wellington	...	...	74	501	14·7
Christchurch	...	...	298	952	31·3
Dunedin	...	...	384	1,200	32·0

The large number of absentees is not creditable to corps, as sufficiently long notices of the inspections had been given and Commanding Officers informed that these were special inspections made at the request of His Royal Highness the Commander-in-Chief by an Imperial General Officer specially selected and detailed for this duty.

14. *Inspections of Individual Corps*.—The corps inspected individually by me during the past year were the Marlborough Hussars, the Bluff and Lyttelton Naval Artillery, the G E and M Batteries Artillery, Blenheim Rifles, Blenheim City Rifles, Arrowtown Rifles, Cromwell Rifles, Whangarei Rifles, Wairoa Rifles, Riverton Rifles, Invercargill City Guards, Gore Rifles, Riversdale Rifles, Masterton Rifles, and Papawai Native Rifles. Cadets: Blenheim, Queenstown, Wellington College, Dunedin High School, Lawrence High School, Outram, Weatherstone, Christ College, Christchurch High School, Arrow, Cromwell, Palmerston South High School, Wanganui Collegiate School.

15. *Corps specially worthy of Mention*.—I was glad, during my stay in Christchurch, to be able to make a special inspection of the E Battery of Artillery, which has gained for itself the reputation of being a particularly smart corps. This battery annually, on the 16th December, which is a general holiday in Canterbury, makes a point of going into the country for the purpose of firing shot and shell, and practising battery and company drill; and Captain Martin was pleased to express a wish that they should be inspected on that day, in the country. I saw the battery in marching order before starting in the drill-shed yard, and minutely inspected the guns, limbers, &c., which were scrupulously clean and in excellent order; and the whole battery looked thoroughly soldierlike and serviceable. I afterwards saw them at Tai Tapu, about nine miles from Christchurch, at shot-and-shell practice, small-arms, company and battery drills, sword-exercise, technical catechising, volley and independent firing with service ammunition, and tracing out gun-pits and epaulements. The whole of these were well done, under the command of Captain Martin, ably assisted by Lieutenant Jackson. The latter officer made a very creditable reconnaissance report, accompanied by a military sketch of the road from Christchurch to Tai Tapu, in a very short time, without any previous knowledge that such a report would be called for. At shot-and-shell practice, at from 800 to 1,200 yards, out of sixty-one shots at natural objects only three were non-effective. In this corps the colony possesses a thoroughly serviceable, well-disciplined, and ably-commanded battery, which would, undoubtedly, render a good account of itself if called on active service. The G Battery at Invercargill, under command of Captain Evans, deserve special mention for their smartness in mounting and dismounting ordnance drill, and for their general appearance on parade. The Blenheim Rifles and Blenheim City Rifles are deserving of special mention for their good musters, clean appearance, and general steadiness on parade, as well as for the way in which the officers and non-commissioned officers drilled the companies. As these two companies never have the advantage of the services of a permanent drill-instructor to assist them, their knowledge of drill is the more creditable to all concerned. The Blenheim Hussars are also a well-horsed and useful corps. The Riversdale Rifles is another corps with which I was much pleased. Though inspected at a very busy time of year for the farmers, the corps mustered 53 of all ranks on parade, and went through the various movements in company drill, skirmishing, &c., under their three officers, to my entire satisfaction. The noticeable features in this corps are their splendid physique, good discipline, and *esprit de corps*. I consider them second to none in the colony, and Captain Donald and his officers may well be proud of their command. The musters of the corps in the Lake district were wretched, and the ignorance of drill evinced by all compelled me to recommend their conversion into rifle-clubs. It appears a farce that a battery of Artillery should ever have been allowed to exist in such an isolated and inaccessible place as Queenstown. At the hours and places named for the inspection of the Hampden and Otepopo Rifles there were no musters, and consequently no inspections. Of the cadets inspected, I must place first in order the Wanganui Collegiate School Cadets, and next the Wellington College and the Canterbury High School. The manual exercise, when marking time, performed by the Wanganui boys showed that considerable pains had been taken in their instruction, and was extremely creditable; while the Wellington College and the Canterbury High School boys were conspicuous for their steadiness in skirmishing. There is a marked improvement generally in the drill of cadet corps during the past year.

16. *Corps not inspected*.—The corps not inspected last year were:—Naval Artillery: Thames, Wanganui, Nelson, Oamaru, Timaru, Napier, Greymouth, and Westport. Cavalry: Canterbury Yeomanry, Waiuku, Alexandra, Te Awamutu, Wairoa, Rangitikei, and East Coast Hussars. Artillery: C, F, H, and I Batteries. Rifles: Oamaru, Rangitikei Royal, Westland, Temuka, Hampden (no muster), Wanganui, Nelson, Otepopo (no muster), Stoke, Taranaki, Napier, Palmerston North, Waimea, Manchester, Wanganui City, Ashburton, Kumara, Greymouth, Canterbury Honorary Reserve, Geraldine, Timaru, Waimate, Hawera, Mangahua, Brunnerton, and Hastings.