

class-firing was done with the Snider rifle. For the final shooting all the corps fired with the Martini-Henry rifle. They always did their Martini-Henry rifle-shooting at Evans Bay.

288. Can you suggest the names of any persons who could give the Commission valuable information?

289. *The Chairman.*] We knew you to be connected with the Naval Volunteers, and what we wanted to get was whether or not this range is valuable to the Volunteers as a range?—I think your best plan is to ask the men of each company to send their best shots to give evidence; you will then get at the bottom of the whole question, as they will be able to give expert evidence. I may be misrepresenting the ideas of the men.

290. We want to arrive at a just conclusion in this matter. It would be better to have one or two men from each company, then we could get perfectly fair evidence. Can you give us any names?—Captains Collins, of the Rifles; St. Hill, of the Artillery; and Paterson, of the Guards, would be able to furnish you with the names of the best shots in their companies. In the Navals, the names of two of our best shots are, I suppose, Williams and Stitt.

WEDNESDAY, 11TH MAY, 1892.

ROBERT J. COLLINS, Captain Wellington City Rifles, examined.

291. *The Chairman.*] You are well acquainted with the Polhill Gully rifle-range?—Yes, I am.

292. What is your opinion as to its suitability for the purpose of a rifle-range?—For the purposes of the Volunteers, and for carrying out the requirements of the Act—that is, for class-firing, and so on—it is most suitable, owing to its proximity to the town.

293. Is that its only recommendation?—Well, not being an open range, it would not be suitable for association meetings, but for a rifle-range for the Volunteers it is useful.

294. Is there any objection to it as a training-ground? Is it a suitable ground to train Volunteers?—Of course it is suitable to train Volunteers, but not to train men for these large meetings.

295. Then, it has been found desirable, I believe, that the forward men should shoot elsewhere, has it not?—Yes, to shoot on an open range, because our association meetings take place on an open range.

296. And therefore it is necessary that the men should practise on an open range?—Yes; those men who attend the colonial meetings should practise on an open range.

297. Do you know what land has been acquired by the Government, and what not?—No, I do not.

298. Then, you are not in a position to say whether there is sufficient land secured to make the range safe for general use?—No; not knowing the quantity of land secured, I am not in a position to say more than that the range has been safe up to the present time. There can be no doubt about that, as we have never had any occasion, when firing, to place a danger-flag on the hill, which is the ordinary precaution laid down to be taken in all cases of shooting where the range is unsafe. Had the range been considered unsafe, or had any accident taken place, the danger-flag would have been placed on the hills. This precaution has been taken on nearly every other range.

299. Are you aware that objections have been made to the use of that spot for a rifle-range by the inhabitants residing in the neighbourhood?—Within the last week only; I have never before heard of any objections.

300. *Mr. Baker.*] Can you express the opinion of your men on the question of the range?—Yes; I am a shooting-man myself.

301. Then, in giving this opinion, it is practically the opinion of your corps?—There are a number of men who prefer the open range; this is to practise for the colonial meetings that they attend, but the proximity of the Polhill Gully range to the town enables the Volunteers to carry out their class-firing and volley-firing. If they had to go a great distance the men could not give up the time to it. Now they can go up at 5 o'clock in the morning, and get away to their work at 7.

Lieutenant DAVY (Petone Navals) examined.

302. *The Chairman.*] You are well acquainted, I suppose, with the Polhill Gully Rifle-range?—Yes; I have been shooting at it for the last twelve years.

303. Do you think it a good range?—Well, you have to look at it from two points of view—namely, as to whether it is a good range for advanced shooting-men, or a good range for companies. Of course, for advanced shooting-men we require an open range; but for companies, for purposes of recruit drill and class-firing, the Polhill Gully range is an absolute necessity. Being so near to Wellington it is a very good range for that purpose.

304. Still, you would require something in addition to finish?—Not necessarily to finish. The ordinary work of a company, which is done to great extent by recruits, requires a range for class-firing and to practice upon. In fact, the class-firing is part of the work we have to do to gain capitulation; and the men could not go out to the Bay, as they could not find the time, especially in winter, as the men go to their class-firing before breakfast. They must therefore have a range close at hand, and Polhill Gully in a case like this is an absolute necessity, especially in the winter time.

305. Then, I understand, you think the two ranges are absolutely necessary. You would use both this and the Evans's Bay range?—Yes; it is necessary to have a long range for 700, 800, and 1,000 yards; but for purposes of ordinary Volunteer work in Wellington the Polhill Gully range is all that is necessary, because the men can get through their different grades at that range.

306. We have it on record that the Volunteers only use the Martini-Henry rifle at Evans's Bay; and what rifle do they use at Polhill Gully?—The Snider; that is the rifle they are armed with. The Martini-Henry is a private weapon which the Government have sold to the Volunteers, and which they use on the long range. The Polhill Gully range is of no use to a man who is going to compete in the New Zealand Rifle Association matches. The men want an open range where they