

1895.
NEW ZEALAND.

DEFENCES AND DEFENCE FORCES OF NEW ZEALAND,

ANNUAL REPORT ON THE (BY COLONEL F. J. FOX, NEW ZEALAND MILITIA,
INSPECTING OFFICER).

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

To the Honourable the PREMIER and DEFENCE MINISTER.

SIR,—

I have the honour to forward herewith my report on the defences and defence forces of the colony for the year 1894-95, which I trust may be found satisfactory.

I have, &c.,

FRANCIS J. FOX,
Colonel, N.Z.M.

Defence Office, 29th July, 1895.

GENERAL REPORT.

SINCE I had the honour of making my last report, the defence of the colony has been much improved, and active steps are being taken at the present time to complete the defence in so far as is considered necessary as regards armament, works, and submarine mines.

The efficiency of the forces is being dealt with and improved. Two thousand Martini rifles have been received in the colony, and the remaining rifles and carbines to complete the proposed equipment, now under order, should be in the hands of the forces within a year.

Arrangements have been made for the supply of small-arm ammunition of proper quality made within the colony.

The remaining necessities—the supply of appointments, accoutrements, renewal of camp-equipment, and completion of stores—are receiving due consideration.

A conference of officers was called together in September by the Hon. the Defence Minister for the purpose of recommending to the Government any changes in Volunteer and defence matters which the conference might consider necessary, and for altering the Volunteer Regulations as might be deemed advisable.

As a result new regulations have been promulgated, and amendments required in the Defence Act will be submitted.

New clothing regulations have been compiled.

Sound recommendations have been submitted to, and approved of by, the Hon. the Minister.

The capitation grant has been increased to £2 10s. per efficient man, very much to the benefit of the Volunteers.

The new regulations provide for the better organization of the Volunteer Force by banding the various companies of the districts into battalions of infantry and brigades of naval artillery.

A much-needed want—the provision of handy manuals of musketry instruction, and of drill for mounted rifles and naval artillery—has been met.

Lieut.-Colonel Newall, New Zealand Militia, commanding the Wellington District, Captain Coleman, New Zealand Militia, and Staff Sergeant-Major Richardson, Royal Artillery, have been respectively associated with the production of these manuals, and have done excellent work.

Staff Sergeant-Major Richardson is now preparing a handy field-artillery manual.

It remains for a proper organization to be completed for each district, under competent headquarters control, when a scheme of defence can be prepared by which the defence of the colony may be brought into effect on emergency arising.

Such a scheme is absolutely necessary. Without it the defence cannot be efficiently conducted. It is also necessary that better infantry instruction should be provided. The officers require instruction in tactics, elementary field fortification, and military topography. I hope that these two very urgent necessities, and the supply to the infantry and mounted rifles of means for carrying a proper amount of ammunition in the field, will be soon remedied.

Under the heading of the “Permanent Forces” I have made certain recommendations, which I hope may receive favourable consideration.

It is to be regretted that a generally very satisfactory report is marred by the fact that in the Auckland District only 59 infantry capitated during the last Volunteer year, which was extended by two months. The fact has to be faced that there is no efficient force for the defence of Auckland. The guns and submarine mines cannot be relied upon unless they are protected by an efficient infantry force.