

one battalion in the country district, with its head-quarters easily accessible by rail to the port, and its companies located within such a distance of each other as to be able to be collected occasionally at a central spot for afternoon battalion drill and field exercise.

The establishment for each of the four districts should be as follows: A sufficient force of Navals to man all the guns and mine-fields at the ports, with the assistance of the Permanent Force, four companies of Mounted Rifles, one town battalion of Rifles (eight companies), one country battalion of Rifles, one Field Battery, one company of Engineers, one company ambulance corps.

In districts where more than four companies of Mounted Rifles could be raised, I should like to see a battalion of eight companies of Mounted Rifles, the two infantry battalions being reduced by two companies each.

I will make further recommendations as regards the Nelson District after Colonel Pitt's return from England.

In many of the small stations I find that the Rifle corps consist largely of men who live in the outlying districts, at some distance from head-quarters, and it is no uncommon thing for a man to have to ride twenty-five or thirty miles to put in an evening drill. This, although it speaks well for the zeal and patriotism of the Volunteers, is not good for the efficiency of the corps; it makes the drill-musters of the corps small, and prevents any out-door instruction being given. I do not consider that corps should be encouraged to enlist men who live more than five miles from head-quarters.

As at present constituted, the Volunteer Force is efficient up to a certain point, the limit being practically what can be taught in the drillsheds. Six days' company camp is allowed each year, during which time the men can be drilled in the field in the mornings and evenings, without interfering with their daily avocations. Easter camps are also held, the working duration of which is practically three days. These camps are most valuable institutions, and are really the only occasions on which the Volunteers get any field training. No troops can be really efficient or in proper fighting condition unless they get a great deal more field training than the Volunteers do at present.

The Volunteers do not turn out to drill of an afternoon for several reasons. In a corps composed of sixty men, there are, of course, men of different trades and callings, serving under different employers. There is no general half-holiday in the week on which all the men can be got together; some tradesmen closing their establishments on Wednesday, some on Saturday. In addition to this, the employers do not give any facilities to the Volunteers in their employ for getting away to attend drill; and, in fact, as a rule, do not in any way encourage the Volunteer movement. In this country, with but few exceptions, every male inhabitant between the ages of seventeen and fifty-four is liable to serve in the Militia when called upon to do so, and the employers of labour should bear in mind that the men in their service who are doing Volunteer duty are acting as an insurance against they themselves being called upon to perform military service.

The attractions of racing, football, cricket, boating, &c., also militate against the attendance of many men on half-holidays.

The spirit of the men is excellent, and, with more encouragement from the Government, I feel sure they would not hesitate to make themselves thoroughly efficient. The regulations provide for each man putting in three whole afternoon parades during the year before he can be counted as an "efficient." The days at Easter camp are allowed to reckon towards this; and a morning and evening's drill put in whilst a corps is in company camp is counted (by Circular No. 29, published 16th October, 1896,) as a whole afternoon drill. Each Volunteer can thus capitate without putting in any afternoon drill but that which he goes through whilst at camp.

More encouragement should be given to the men to turn out for afternoon drills during the year. This encouragement, I think, must take the shape of a pecuniary one to the corps. An extra amount of capitation should be given to every corps turning out to an afternoon parade in excess of the three required by regulation when three-fourths of their number are present, a certain number of such parades being held annually to entitle them to this extra capitation—say, one a month—the parade to be essentially a field, and not a drillshed parade. In stations where two or more infantry corps exist they should be paraded together. It is essential that training should be given as much as possible in field manoeuvres. The drillshed work simply prepares a man for the training he should get in the field to turn him into an efficient soldier.

The Volunteer officers, as far as I have seen, are not as well up in their work as they ought to be, but I understand that they are improving, and in the great majority of cases are taking much interest in their work. They suffer, in common with their men, from the want of proper and efficient instruction. There are not a sufficient number of instructors in the country, and many of those who are out here are useless and past their work.

I consider that three Infantry officers should be got out from the Imperial Forces. These officers should possess a certificate from the School of Musketry, and have passed through the Mounted Infantry course at Aldershot.

In addition, each district and each battalion should have a sergeant instructor. This would make a total of seventeen infantry instructors, as the districts are at present constituted, allowing one battalion for the Nelson District, and one extra instructor for the Wellington District:

SMALL-ARMS AMMUNITION.

Constant complaints have been made as to the quality of the ammunition supplied to the troops. The complaint comes from all parts of the colony.

The Colonial Ammunition Company are under contract to supply the whole of the small-arm ammunition required for the Forces of the colony. The specification they work to is not such a severe one as is in force in England. The powder is ordered by the Government from Home, and