

The appointment of officers to the Volunteer Force should be made by the military authorities, and not, as at present, by election of the men. The Volunteer Regulations have been altered in this latter respect, but so far the Defence Act has remained unamended. It is a most important matter for the efficiency and discipline of the Volunteer Force that this should be done.

The Defence Act provides that all the male inhabitants of New Zealand (with a few exceptions) between seventeen and fifty-five years of age shall be liable to serve in the Militia. I recommend that steps should be taken to draw up lists in each district of all the male inhabitants subject to the classes mentioned in paragraph 22 of the Act, and that these lists should be revised at stated periods.

MUSKETRY INSTRUCTION.

Sufficient attention is not given to practising the men in firing under service conditions. Much encouragement is given to men who are good individual shots, and no doubt the attractions of the rifle-range induce many men to become Volunteers. What is wanted, however, is to teach them to shoot under conditions as near as possible similar to those they would meet with when on active service. We should endeavour to raise the quality of shooting of the whole Force, and not to confine ourselves to encouraging only the "crack" shots in the Force.

Many of the ranges are confined and unsuitable for practice in field-firing. Near most of the towns land is available for ranges, and the Government should give every assistance to the Volunteers to enable them to perfect themselves in the most important part of their training.

The Government has granted considerable assistance to the New Zealand Rifle Association in the past. If this is to be continued in the future, I consider the meeting should be carried out under the authority and supervision of military authorities, and that prizes should be given for field-firing.

TRANSPORT AND COMMISSARIAT.

There are no arrangements for either of these services, nor for the supply of ammunition in the field. At each centre arrangements should be entered into with one of the carrying companies to provide, in case of necessity, pack-horses and carts sufficient to meet the requirements of the Field Force for carriage of tents, baggage, and ammunition. Each company of Rifles should make provision for the supply of two pack-horses for the carriage of reserve ammunition.

At each centre a contract should be entered into annually for the supply of provisions to the Field Force in case of necessity.

DIVISION OF MILITARY DISTRICTS.

By a notice which appeared in the *Gazette* on the 28th February, 1895, the colony was divided into five military districts for administrative purposes. This was in accordance with the recommendation made by Colonel Fox, and approved by the Military Conference of 1894. The districts were as follow: Auckland, Wellington, Nelson, Canterbury, and Otago. The first four districts have been kept intact, but the Otago District has been split up into three independent commands—North Otago, South Otago, and Southland. This is a retrograde step, and I recommend that the Otago District should be at once re-formed as in 1895. Unless this is done, the battalion system cannot be satisfactorily carried out in that part of the colony. The North Otago District is composed of only four corps, and the Southland District of seven corps.

The officer at present commanding the South Otago District should be given the command of the entire Otago District, the present districts of North Otago and Southland being formed into sub-districts of that command.

CONCLUSION.

In conclusion, I would urge that the matter of military reforms may be dealt with from the broad point of view of benefit to the colony at large, and that the claims of any special districts which may interfere with the great question of defence should be made subservient to the greater claims of the united colony.

I have, &c.,

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