

1s. 6d. forage-allowance daily for the eight days of the camp was sanctioned. This worked well, and I am of opinion that if we could always grant such camp-allowance we would get good musters of men, as they would not then be put to any personal expense by going to camp. The capitation should be increased to £3 10s., to allow for the upkeep of saddlery and provision of bridles and head-ropes of a uniform pattern.

The officer commanding the Otago Battalion of Mounted Rifles has put before me an excellent scheme for the training of the mounted corps, which meets with my entire approval. He is of opinion that the mounted corps of the colony are recruited from a class of men to whom the loss of two or three extra days at Easter are of little consideration. He proposes that each corps, instead of going into combined camp for its training, should go into a company camp and receive the individual training to fit it to take its place in a combined camp for the practice of extended manœuvres; the time of training for the Easter camp to be extended to a week for all mounted corps. This would entail but little extra expense to the Government, and would give two weeks' training to the mounted corps instead of one, as at present. Owing to the large area from which a mounted corps is recruited, there will be some difficulty in men earning the 2s. 6d. sanctioned as a personal payment for six afternoon drills, and this they might be enabled partly to earn by staying the extra days in camp.

I have sanctioned a trial of this system being made in the Otago District, as far as the individual camps go, and trust that the Government will see its way to approve of the extended training at Easter. If successful as regards the Otago District this year, the system should be applied throughout the colony next year.

FIELD ARTILLERY.

There are now five batteries of field artillery in the colony—one at each of the four centres and one of two guns at Nelson for protection of the Cable Station.

The batteries at Napier and Invercargill have been turned into rifle companies, and we have now two batteries of six 9-pr. R.B.L. guns each, respectively at Dunedin and Christchurch, one of four 6-pr. Nordenfeldts (to be increased to six guns) at Wellington, and one of five 9-pr. R.B.L. guns at Auckland; also one of two 6-pr. Nordenfeldt guns at Nelson, to be increased eventually to four guns. A complete battery of 15-pr. B.L. guns, with wagons and harness, has been ordered from England; and, under present arrangements, one is to be ordered annually until the four ports are each provided with a modern field battery.

The provision of these batteries will necessarily very much modify the condition of training of the Field Artillery. At present the batteries only turn out horsed to fire a salute on the Queen's Birthday and occasionally for special ceremonial parades and field days, and to march to and from camps and practice. Only one pair of horses is allowed per gun, and consequently the guns cannot go out of a walk, and cannot practise taking up positions such as they would be called upon to occupy in action on ground commanding the surrounding country. Should they by any means succeed in getting into such a position, they could not be withdrawn in time to avoid capture if at all pressed by the enemy. The new field batteries will be practically white elephants and useless unless they are properly manned and horsed. Men and horses should be trained to impart sufficient mobility to the guns to enable them to play their proper part in the defence.

The Volunteer regulations are being altered to allow of the field batteries going into camp for a fortnight instead of six days, and during this time they should take six horses per gun into camp, and be exercised in manœuvring as well as in gun drill and fire discipline. The officers, staff-sergeants and Nos. 1 of detachments should all be mounted every time the battery turns out for manœuvre.

As the four modern batteries will be allocated to the principal ports and manned by Volunteers who do not own horses, contracts should be entered into with firms owning a good stamp of horse for the supply of the required number of horses when called upon. The firms should undertake as far as possible always to supply the same horses and drivers. The drivers to be enrolled as Volunteers, and earn their capitation by attending all the mounted parades.

In addition to the fortnight camps, the batteries should turn out once a month for mounted parades of an afternoon. These parades should carry a personal payment of 2s. 6d. a head to the men turning out, and should not be earned unless a sufficient number of men turn out to enable the battery to be efficiently worked.

The rifles have now been withdrawn from all the batteries, and a proper proportion of carbines issued in their place. The musketry course will be altered and modified so that the men will not earn their capitation on the strength of their skill with the rifle, but on their efficiency as Field Artillerymen.

NAVAL AND GARRISON ARTILLERY.

This branch of the service is divided into two separate divisions: the Artillery Branch told off to assist in working the guns in the forts, and the Submarine Mining Branch to assist in laying the mine-fields, &c. It is quite a misnomer to call a corps having nothing to do with artillery work an artillery corps, and the corps employed exclusively on submarine-mining work should be styled "Submarine-mining Corps." The Defence Act should be altered in this respect, as in its present form it does not permit of men being enrolled except for artillery work.

The officers and men of the Artillery Corps are keen Volunteers, and anxious and willing to learn their work, but they suffer from the fact that the majority of the forts are situated at some distance from the towns, and can only be got at by water. This prevents them in the majority of cases drilling at the forts in the positions they would have to occupy in action, except during the time of their annual camp.

All drill, except in very special cases, is carried out of an evening, but now that daylight parades have been sanctioned, I hope that all the daylight drills will be carried out in the forts. To