

of their own pockets. This is an anomaly which should no longer be allowed to exist. The men should be granted an allowance of 1s. 6d. a day whilst in camp for forage, and the Volunteer regulations should be amended to this effect. This would remove a long-standing grievance, and be a boon much appreciated by the men. The mounted branch of the service is worthy of all encouragement, and should be treated with all fairness.

The Martini-Enfield rifle and carbine having practically the same range and being equally powerful weapons, it has been decided to arm all the mounted corps with the carbine, it being a handier weapon to carry when riding. This change cannot be carried out until the supply of Martini-Enfield arms now under order from England is received. The carbine will be carried in the bucket now on issue to the troops, which so far has proved a success.

The mounted branch of the service suffers from want of qualified instructors. We have now eighteen corps in existence, scattered all over the colony and only one Instructor. This officer attends all their Company camps, and is of the greatest assistance to the commanding officers; but as he has duties to perform in connection with the Permanent Force he cannot devote the whole of his time to the instruction of the mounted corps. He should have no other work to do but instruction work, and should be free to move about and devote a certain time each year to each district. I hope this want of instruction will be somewhat remedied when the non-commissioned officers arrive from England, as some of them, I trust, will have gone through the mounted infantry course at Aldershot.

My last year's recommendation to increase the capitation of the mounted corps by £1 has not yet been approved.

FIELD ARTILLERY.

The 15-pr. field battery ordered last year from England has not yet been received. By the time the Imperial authorities decided on the change to quick-firing guns for field service, the manufacture of the battery had been so far advanced that it was impossible to provide it with a quick-firing breech mechanism. Certain modifications, however, have been introduced which will much accelerate its speed of gun-fire in action, and render it for all practical purposes a quick-firing battery.

I understood last year that orders were to be given annually for one field battery until the four ports were each provided with modern field guns. So far no steps have been taken to carry this out this year, and it is most essential that if a battery is to be ordered the order should be given at once. Payment will not have to be made for it this year, as the ordnance factories and gun-making firms will probably be extremely busy manufacturing new ordnance for the Imperial service, and, in order to get supply in anything like reasonable time, the order should be placed as soon as possible. The present armament of the field artillery is not a strong point of our defence.

The B Battery at Dunedin was the only field artillery corps to take advantage of the concession to turn out for paid-afternoon mounted parades during the year.

NAVAL AND GARRISON ARTILLERY.

The corps of this branch of the service take a deep interest in their work, and all ranks endeavour to perfect themselves in their duties in the forts. I have arranged that at stations, where it is feasible, the nightly drills should be carried out as frequently as can be arranged in the defence-works, and that the men should receive as much of their training as possible in the forts. Unfortunately, at all stations, some of the forts are situated at a considerable distance from the drill-halls, and can only be reached by water, and even if the Volunteers could spare the necessary time, we have no boats suitable for carrying a body of men. I trust that this year all the artillery corps will do their utmost to attend the daylight parades, for which personal payment is made, as it is only by an intimate knowledge of their forts and the system of working them, that they can fit themselves to take their parts in this line of defence.

I am putting forward proposals for prize-firing this summer by companies, and the classification of companies by their skill in competitive practice with heavy ordnance, which I hope will receive sanction.

All the artillery corps, with the exception of the Port Chalmers Naval Artillery, carried out their sixteen days' training in the works of defence. The post of this corps when mobilised for defence is at Tairaroa Heads, and the headquarters of the corps in peace time at Port Chalmers.

The defence launch at Port Chalmers can carry very few men, and the journey from Port Chalmers to the Heads occupies nearly an hour, so that practically two hours would be lost in going backward and forward daily during the time of the annual camp. Inquiries were made as to whether we could hire a boat to take all the men and to do the journey expeditiously, but the only boat offered was the Harbour Board's tug "Plucky," and the terms were £2 an hour when not required for towing, which were prohibitive. I trust that some arrangements may be made this year to enable this corps to encamp at the works of defence.

SUBMARINE MINING CORPS.

There are two corps in the colony now whose work is entirely confined to submarine mining—one at Wellington and one at Auckland, whilst a section of the Port Chalmers Navals devote their services exclusively to submarine-mining work.

We have in the colony an equipment of stores, &c., for the several mine-fields, and Instructors to teach the men the use and care of these stores, but, unfortunately, we have no boats suitable for submarine-mining work, and so are unable to carry out any practical work in laying out mines.

The present state of the boats in the colony is as follows:—

Wellington.—Defence launch "Ellen Ballance": Not at all fit for laying mines in the weather which is frequently experienced in Wellington Harbour—in fact, it sometimes happens that she