

CADET CORPS.

There are now fifty-six cadet corps under the Defence Department in the colony. During the last year thirteen new corps have been accepted. The efficiency and discipline of cadet corps on the whole is satisfactory. All are now armed with the Lee-Enfield or Martini-Enfield carbine; their equipment, however, is incomplete. Haversacks should be an issue to cadet corps.

No increase of free ammunition to cadet corps, as recommended, has been sanctioned; the present allowance is too small, and should be doubled.

As stated in my report for 1903, I would desire to see the cadet movement very much more developed; the training imparted cannot but be of national value. I have ever since my arrival in the colony expressed the conviction that every English-speaking boy throughout the Empire should be trained as a cadet. Men who have been so trained are better fitted both morally and physically for civil life, as well as for military employment should they be required.

RIFLE CLUBS.

There are one hundred rifle clubs in the colony. Beyond shooting, rifle-club men receive no training for war. Officers commanding districts have no time to devote to the superintendence of rifle clubs, and, unless the requisite district staff is provided, the only alternative I can suggest to in any way amend the unsatisfactory state of affairs would be to appoint an officer specially to superintend rifle clubs. Unless the obligations of rifle clubs are very much more extended I cannot, however, represent them as being an efficient integral part of the Defence Forces.

NEW ZEALAND DEFENCE FORCES RIFLE ASSOCIATION.

A successful meeting was held at Trentham on the 3rd March, 1904, and following days. The total number of entries was 335, and the large number of young shots that came forward was very satisfactory. An advance was made in the matter of making competition more under service conditions than in previous years, and it is hoped still further advances in this direction will take place.

A team sailed for England on the 20th April, 1904, to take part in the Bisley competition, and from the reports received has won the Kolapore Cup, and has otherwise rendered a very satisfactory account of itself.

CAMPS AND CAMP EQUIPMENT.

Camps were held in the vicinity of Nelson and Auckland last Easter. The necessity for these was evident, and much useful instruction was gained by those who attended. Even with the small numbers concentrated, the lack of trained staff was severely felt. If such can occur in peace, it is not difficult to foresee what would happen in war. Such concentrations are most valuable, and should be carried out each year in all districts. Approval or otherwise for the same should be notified not later than the 1st January of each year. The amount to be expended in each district should be notified; the Officers Commanding Districts having control of the same to expend to the best advantage. By this means a very large amount of unnecessary correspondence and work would be saved, and they would receive some of that training in the control of expenditure which is so necessary. In a short time, too, I have little doubt that, as has happened elsewhere, real economy would be effected.

The present system under which the annual training-camps are held is not altogether satisfactory, and where corps only go into camp for evening and morning work full value for the money expended on them is not obtained. It is hoped that by next year a more satisfactory scheme, which is now under consideration, may have been inaugurated.

ARMS, EQUIPMENT, AND CLOTHING.

The establishment of a reserve of rifles has been effected, and it is hoped that this reserve will shortly be augmented to meet all requirements.

The completion of the equipment of corps is proceeding, but owing to one cause and another is still far from completion. A new bandolier equipment to replace the unserviceable pouch equipment has been approved, and is being issued by degrees. I would again bring to notice the fact that greatcoats and waterproof sheets are necessary articles of equipment.

SCHOOL OF INSTRUCTION.

During the year 1903-4 396 candidates received partial instruction, and out of these 236 completed a full course at the School of Instruction.

The result of the year's work is satisfactory, and even where candidates have only been able to attend a part of a course they have learnt something of advantage to the service.

The attendance of senior battalion officers is not satisfactory, the consequence being that they are in many cases unacquainted with the best methods of instruction, and systematic teaching of the lower ranks is in such cases not understood or carried out.

The system of examination has been changed. Instead of separate examination for officers and non-commissioned officers being held on the completion of each course, candidates are now examined by the Central Board of Examination test for promotion, which is held quarterly.

The School of Instruction is an institution that is of much benefit to the Volunteer Force. The more opportunities for receiving instruction that can be placed within the reach of officers and non-commissioned officers, the more efficient corps, &c., must become. It would be advantageous were the sphere of the School of Instruction enlarged so as to embrace that teaching in the work that should be performed by officers on the staff in peace and which would have to be carried out by them in time of war.