

the present session receive consideration. The disabilities connected with the system still continue to very detrimentally affect the Volunteer Forces.

I have recommended that the term of enlistment for Volunteers be for one year, as formerly, instead of for three years as is at present the case, and this has been approved. Many men do not like to bind themselves for a three years' engagement, and their services are thus lost to the country. Although one year's service cannot render a man efficient, it is better than no training at all, and the majority of the men worth keeping would continue to serve beyond that period.

Volunteer regulations, which I reported last year, have been rewritten, but have not yet been approved of, and the want of them is seriously felt.

The terms for earning capitation referred to in last year's report have worked well, and the concessions which were granted have proved of value. The battalion system has been recommended for cadets, and it is hoped will be shortly introduced.

The frequent inspections by Officers Commanding Districts which have taken place have been of good effect. Were the required staff, however, in existence, better results both as regards training and discipline would be arrived at.

The officers' clubs continue to have a most beneficial effect.

An excellent spirit pervades all ranks of the Defence Force.

I have, so far as is possible, pointed out what I consider the shortcomings of the Defence Force of the colony. Recent events in the East and the Imperial interests in the Pacific demand attention to the position as regards defence that this colony occupies. Beyond this, too, sooner or later, the existence of a force to defend Imperial interests in Australasia must be imperative; and for every reason any such force as now exists should be organized on sound principles.

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Commandant of New Zealand Defence Forces.

The Hon. the Minister of Defence.

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