

## No. 2.

The OFFICER COMMANDING PUBLIC-SCHOOL CADETS to the Right Hon. the MINISTER OF EDUCATION.

SIR,—

Wellington, 1st May, 1906.

I have the honour to submit the following report regarding the public-school cadets. In order to bring the report into line with the system prevailing in the other branches of the Department, the year has been made to close on the 31st December instead of the 30th June so far as the statistics are concerned; but other matter is brought up to the date given above, and this system will be adopted in future reports.

*Organization.*—Since the last report further battalions with their respective staffs have been organized in Auckland (1), Wellington (1), North Canterbury (1), making the total number of battalions 28.

The strength of the corps in the several education districts on the 30th June, 1905, was 12,524, and at the 31st March, 1906, 14,115, being an increase of 1,591.

The keenness referred to in last year's report is as marked as ever, and the manner in which it has been displayed both on the parade-ground and camp is unquestionable. Thanks are due to headmasters and officers for the interest they have at all times displayed in furthering and fostering the movement; and the consensus of their opinions is that considerably more time and attention could fairly be given to this, which may now be called a factor in the training of our boys for the defence of the Empire.

*Inspection of Corps.*—The inspection of the whole of the corps in the colony, with the exception of those in the Taranaki, Wanganui, Hawke's Bay, and Wellington Education Districts, was completed by the end of the year, and the inspection of the two first-named districts has now been completed. A general knowledge of drill was shown in a greater or lesser degree by all corps, and it is pleasing to be able to report that much progress has been made. As usual, the sergeants were examined personally, and showed in many cases great efficiency. Their services are in many cases used in drilling boys who are at present ineligible under the Cadet Regulations to join their school corps.

*Manual of Infantry Training for Public-school Cadets, 1905.*—This edition has just been issued, and orders are coming in freely from corps for copies of it. The principal feature of this edition is that the positions in company drill are fully illustrated by photographs; thus not only the company in the various positions, but also those who form the supernumerary rank—viz., a company in line, in column of half-companies; column of sections; columns of fours, twos, file, and in extended order—can at a glance see their respective positions.

*Equipment.*—At the 30th June, 1905, 11,500 cadets were equipped, and at the end of that year the number equipped was 12,450. In consequence of the rapidity with which the movement has been taken up it has been found impossible to keep the equipment in pace with it, and whether the articles now under order will meet the demand remains to be seen. Generally speaking the equipment was found clean and in good order, with the exception of the model rifles. These at the best are not of a strong make, the principal fault being the weakness of the main springs—made of wire—which soon weaken and have not enough force to explode the percussion-caps. It is proposed, if possible (at a very small cost), to replace the action by a stronger spring or by new lock-plates. The model is admirably suited for drill purposes on account of its lightness, and for obvious reasons cannot be substituted by one which could be used for firing purposes.

*Ammunition.*—It is pleasing to be able to state that one-half of the annual supply (300,000 rounds) was supplied by the Colonial Ammunition Company from its works at Auckland. In place of cordite the cartridges are charged with troisdorf powder, this being considered to produce less heating and fouling than the former. The cartridges are superior to the imported ones, being more reliable in every respect, and from all accounts the ammunition is giving entire satisfaction.

*Result of Shield Competitions.*—The results for 1905 for the North and South Island shields are given below. The highest score up to the present was made by the Onehunga Cadets, and it is a strange coincidence that this corps and the Waimate Cadets should again, in the same year, win the respective shields for a second time. The averages for 1904 were—for the North Island 71·1, and for the South Island 71·1, whereas for 1905 they were 73·5 and 64·2 respectively. Photographs of the teams will be found in the Appendices.

*Class Firing.*—The results in class firing for 1905 are not so good as for 1904, and, further, it was found that many corps had not fired their classes at all. Such being the case, and seeing that the Government had supplied everything necessary to carry out the firing, a Cadet Order was issued stating that in future unless a corps did its class firing the annual capitation grant would be withheld. Here again the question of finding time to do the class firing arises. Some have even said that time will not be found unless the ordinary syllabus were curtailed, but the total time required for completing the classifying of any corps is really so small that this suggestion can hardly be taken seriously. Some definite action ought to be taken and a rule laid down making rifle shooting compulsory, for this important part of the cadet's training is being sadly neglected. The following are the winners of the district medals for 1905:—

District.	Rank and Name.	Town.	Number of Points.
Auckland .. ..	Private William Friar ..	Onehunga .. ..	72
Hawke's Bay .. ..	Private R. Boyle .. ..	Hastings .. ..	72
Taranaki .. ..	Private W. Huse .. ..	Stratford .. ..	74
Wellington .. ..	Sergeant James McShane ..	Mount Cook, Wellington ..	78
Canterbury North ..	Private Edwin Beker ..	Southbrook .. ..	74
Canterbury South ..	Corporal D. Sams .. ..	Timaru .. ..	77
Otago .. ..	Sergeant Thomas Mark ..	Lawrence .. ..	75
Southland .. ..	Private G. Beattie .. ..	Gore .. ..	68
Grey .. ..	Private John Coulthard ..	Taylorville .. ..	68