

Rifle-range sites at Hastings and Pahiatua have been leased. Subsidies have also been granted in various parts, and minor repairs carried out by the corps where the ranges are situated.

Drill-sheds.

The drill-sheds in the Dominion have received attention wherever required, and are in a satisfactory condition. Wherever they are erected on drill-shed reserves they are vested in Trustees under the Act of 1888.

In Auckland District a grant will be made towards the Thames shed, when the site is vested in the Crown.

In Wellington District repairs have been carried out at the Napier Garrison Hall and subsidy granted towards improvements at the Pahiatua and Petone sheds. At Gisborne a new shed is being erected on a fresh site, the Government grant amounting to £2,900.

A new and up-to-date shed has been erected for the Garrison in Wellington, and also a new shed for the Permanent Force.

A grant towards necessary addition to the armourer's shop at Headquarters has also been approved.

At Christchurch, caretakers' quarters have been erected at King Edward Barracks, and retaining-walls are being erected at the Lyttelton Drill-shed.

Repairs have been effected to a number of sheds in the Nelson District.

In Otago District additions have been carried out at the Garrison Artillery Volunteers' shed, and at Arrowtown and the Bluff.

Negotiations are still proceeding in connection with the proposal to erect a new shed in Dunedin.

Minor repairs and additions have been made to other sheds throughout the Dominion from company funds, &c.

DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE.

The sum of £176,426 was spent out of the Consolidated Fund last year for Defence services generally, which included the expenditure in connection with the Permanent Force, Volunteer Force, Stores and Magazines, and Defence Miscellaneous Services.

The chief items of expenditure were as follows:—

Salaries and Pay,—	£
Headquarters	6,994
Permanent Force	42,727
Volunteer Force	8,952
Stores and Magazines	4,875
Capitation and personal payments to Volunteers	35,735
Training-camps and instruction	8,425
Ammunition	28,236
Arms, equipment, and warlike stores	9,547

It is estimated for the current year that an amount of £214,470 will be required, the increase being accounted for by additional amount required for Easter manœuvres, purchase of arms and accoutrements, camp equipage, and ammunition.

To provide for the increased pay of the Permanent Force, according to establishment, £60,420 will be needed. This provides for the extra amount of pay payable under the new scheme, and awards for proficiency and good conduct. In the past the rates of pay in regard to the Permanent Force throughout the Dominion were considered far from satisfactory, as little or no provision was made for length of service or efficiency. The scheme of pay which is now in operation will obviate any difficulty in that respect in future, as it embraces all officers, non-commissioned officers, and men of the Defence Forces. It has been the means of making the members of the Force more contented, and is giving general satisfaction, the beneficial effect being already apparent.

As mentioned in the report last year, the Permanent Force expenditure is now kept separate from that of the Volunteer Force, so that the cost of the various services may be ascertained at a glance. This mode of keeping the expenditure, although entailing extra clerical labour, is a decided improvement on the old system.

Out of the Public Works Fund £11,598 was spent on the erection and additions to drill-sheds, and £8,330 in respect of rifle ranges.

The estimated amount required to be voted this year under Contingent Defence is £20,000, which provides for the purchase of six field-guns, erection of and additions to drill-sheds, acquirement of rifle ranges, and other expenditure incidental to the vote.

In connection with fixed harbour-defence the sum of £15,000 is asked for in order to carry out work of an important nature in connection with the defence of our principal ports.

NEW ZEALAND DEFENCE FORCES RIFLE ASSOCIATION.

The annual prize meeting of the New Zealand Defence Forces Rifle Association was held at Trentham, commencing on Thursday, the 5th March, and continued till the following Wednesday.

The meeting proved a highly successful one, there being a record entry, while the shooting throughout was of a high order.