

THE OFFICER COMMANDING THE NEW ZEALAND PUBLIC-SCHOOL CADETS to the Hon. the MINISTER OF EDUCATION.

SIR,—

Wellington, 28th April, 1909.

I have the honour to submit herewith my annual report upon the condition and efficiency of the cadet corps belonging to the various schools throughout the Dominion.

*Organization.*—At the end of the year 1907 the number of public-school cadet battalions was thirty-one. During the year 1908 the 2nd Taranaki Battalion was organized, thus bringing the number of battalions up to thirty-two at the end of 1908. The total strength of the corps in the several education districts at the end of March, 1909, was 14,686, a decrease of 497 on that of the preceding year.

*Inspection of Corps.*—During the year the corps attached to the schools in the Education Districts of South Canterbury, Nelson, Marlborough, Westland, Otago, Grey, and Wellington were inspected. The schools in Taranaki were visited in March of this current year. The large number of corps now in existence precludes an annual inspection of each during each calendar year.

In drill and in general appearance the smartness shown by the rank and file was well up to the standard of previous years.

*Equipment.*—In last year's report reference was made to a proposal to gradually replace the model rifles in use by model rifles with mechanism of a superior pattern. It was found, however, to be more economical to obtain the improved pattern of locks to replace those worn out, and accordingly a supply of 5,000 has been ordered.

*Ammunition.*—The ammunition obtained from the Colonial Ammunition Company (Limited) continues to give every satisfaction.

*Results of Shields Competitions.*—The competition for the shields proved very keen, and it is with much pleasure that I have to report a decided improvement in the results of the shooting. No. 1 Company, Dannevirke North School, again proved its superiority over the other school teams of the Dominion, the team putting up the excellent score of 798 points, out of a possible 840. This score constitutes a record for the competition. The South Island shield was won by the North-east Valley School No. 1 Cadets. (See Table I.)

*Class Firing.*—The results of the class firing of the various corps are very gratifying. The scores show a great improvement on those obtained in previous years, and warrant the belief that more time and attention are now given to this important work. The Dannevirke North Cadets hold the premier position in this department, and, in addition to obtaining a large percentage of marksmen's badges, also won the District Prize Medal for the Hawke's Bay District, with a possible of eighty-four points.

*Colonial Ammunition Company's Prizes.*—The names of the winners of these prizes will be found in Table I.

*The "Weekly Press" Prizes.*—In the competition for these prizes, held in December, the Woodville District High School Cadets and the Waimate High School Cadets again proved the winners in the North Island and South Island respectively. The scores, which were higher than those for 1907, are given in Table I.

*Miniature Rifle Range.*—Owing to unforeseen difficulties, the proposal to erect miniature rifle ranges referred to in last year's report has not materialized; it is expected, however, to have one erected in a few weeks' time for testing purposes.

*Cadet Camps.*—The following battalions went into camps of training during the year—viz., the North Auckland, Taranaki, the 1st and 3rd Auckland, Thames, Ohinemuri, 3rd Wellington, and 1st Taranaki; the total strength of all ranks being 1,343.

The work done at these camps was of a high order, the cadets and officers all entering into the work with fine spirit. The sanitary arrangements of the camp were carried out under an officer of the Health Department, and the general health of the cadets was excellent.

Thanks are due to the medical men who voluntarily visited the camp daily, and also to the chaplains and clergymen who in turn took up their quarters in the camps and conducted Divine service at frequent intervals. The latter gentlemen expressed themselves as well satisfied with the whole of the camp arrangements.

*Cap-covers.*—Cap-covers were worn by the cadets in all the camps, and were found to be of great service during the very warm weather.

*Infantry Training.*—The manuals referred to last year have been issued to all corps.

*"Lord Roberts's Boys."*—Colour-Sergeant Friar (now Lieutenant), of the Onehunga District High School Cadets, who was chosen as the representative of the public-school cadets, took part in the shooting competitions held at Bisley in August last. By his excellent shooting there in the different matches he upheld his New Zealand reputation, and came second in the matches. While in England, Colour-Sergeant Friar was the guest of Dr. R. J. E. Hanson and his wife, to whom thanks are due for their kindness and attention to the young cadet. Both of them have spoken highly of Friar's conduct while in England. Before leaving England on his return to New Zealand, Colour-Sergeant Friar was presented by Lord Roberts, F.M., V.C., with a .303 L.M. rifle, bearing a suitably engraved silver plate on the butt.

The annual local matches for the "Meath Trophy," open to public-school cadets, will be fired shortly.

*Dominion Day.*—On the 26th September all the public-school cadets in the Dominion paraded locally, when the ceremony of saluting the flag and marching past was gone through.

*Visit of the United States Fleet.*—On the occasion of the visit of the fleet at Auckland in August last, the three battalions of the Auckland public-school cadets, mustering 1,286 of all ranks, paraded for the purpose of taking part in the ceremony held in honour of the visit of the fleet. The cadets were complimented by Admiral Sperry upon their marching and fine general appearance.