

1910.
NEW ZEALAND.

THE KNYVETT CASE

CORRESPONDENCE AND EVIDENCE IN CONNECTION WITH).

Laid on the Table of the House by Leave.

No. 1.

Captain KNYVETT, Auckland, to the Hon. the MINISTER OF DEFENCE, Wellington.

No. 1 Company's Trip to Wellington.

SIR,—

Auckland, 10th November, 1909.

I have the honour to most respectfully bring the following complaint officially under your notice, and in support thereof attest the facts as under :—

1. That on Friday, the 29th October, I in company with two officers and sixty-five men of my company, at the invitation of the officer commanding the Petone Navals, travelled to Wellington by the ordinary express as ordinary passengers, paying our own fares, in order that we might visit the Petone Navals' camp during their course of training, and benefit in efficiency by the knowledge gained at this camp.

2. That this visit was the outcome of a conversation with the officers of the Petone Navals when they were in Auckland at our manœuvring camp last Easter. As a result of this conversation, I wrote to the officer commanding the Petone Navals on the 9th October, and asked if they were still of the same mind and were prepared to receive an unofficial visit from the members of my corps to their camp.

I received a reply from the officer commanding the Petone Navals on the 13th, giving myself and company a most cordial invitation to stay for a whole week as the private guests of the Petone Naval Volunteers, in which it is stated they would be glad to privately ration and look after our men while they were there, if I would wire to him when we anticipated leaving Auckland.

On the 26th ultimo I wired the officer commanding Petone Navals, asking if he were ready and willing to receive us if we left on Friday, the 29th. I received a wire to the effect that he would be most delighted to do so.

On the 27th ultimo I wrote and asked permission of the officer commanding my division (to whom I am alone responsible) for leave to travel a section of my corps in uniform. (I may here state that this is probably the first time in the history of the Defence Council where such a request has been made). It has invariably been the custom for members and sections of corps to travel from one end of New Zealand to the other, without permission to travel in uniform; and passes have been granted without question for all sorts of military tournaments, and to meet to compete for all kinds of money-prizes, from one end of New Zealand to the other. We asked for nothing more than permission to travel in uniform.

My reason for this was that I desired to have an opportunity of upholding the best traditions of the Volunteer service in the Auckland District, by having under control the men who formed the party leaving for Wellington. If I did not travel in uniform I would not have had the control over the men which I have exercised, and possibly a very grave scandal might have resulted from such a number of men being without any control and in all sorts of private clothes.

3. That I received a notification from the officer commanding the Petone Navals that arrangements had been made to officially welcome and receive my corps on arrival at Wellington. This wire I got in the early morning on the express train.

To my intense astonishment, and to the consternation of my officers and men, we found on arrival at Wellington there was no one to receive us. After half an hour's wait two officers of the Petone