

APPENDICES.

APPENDIX No. 1.

[Extract from the *Dominion*, Wellington, of 1st November, 1909.]

A HUGE SURPRISE.—SIXTY GUNNERS FROM AUCKLAND.—ABSENT WITHOUT LEAVE.—ENCAMPED AT FORT KELBURNE.

Without as much as a "by your leave," in defiance of the rules and regulations, absolutely on their own initiation, in fact, sixty gunners from the Auckland Division of Garrison Artillery Volunteers walked into the training-camp of the Petone Navals at Fort Kelburne on Saturday evening, and announced that they had come down to knock that crack gunnery corps "kite high" in a big-gun "shoot." Strange hands were to be laid upon the big green monsters "A1" and "A2," which slumbered in their lairs, unconscious of the peril of their masters. To say that the Petone gunners were surprised is to feebly describe the situation. To arrange for the accommodation and comfort of sixty men requires some previous organization, considerable thought—not a matter of running round the corner for a few extras for tea, so to say. But when a half-company descends, as it were, from the clouds, and asks for food and lodging, and so forth, there is presented to the surprised host a problem of some difficulty.

A Costly Match.

To begin at the beginning: The other day a rumour was circulated in Wellington that a big-gun shooting competition had been arranged to take place at Fort Kelburne, Ngahauranga, between the Auckland and the Petone gunners. The rumour was investigated by a representative of *The Dominion*, and, as the result of inquiries made at headquarters, was subsequently contradicted in these columns. It was then stated that the cost of such a competition would run into something like £300, a sum which would be out of all proportion to the event—an inter-company match. It was, therefore, with no little surprise that one of our representatives noticed several gunners of the Auckland Garrison Artillery Division, in uniform, walking about town on Saturday night, and, upon inquiry, discovered that sixty non-commissioned officers and men of No. 1 Company, Auckland Garrison Artillery Volunteers, under Captain Knyvett, Lieutenant Greenhough, and Surgeon-Captain Murray, had arrived in Wellington by the Main Trunk express that afternoon for the purpose of challenging the Petone Navals at a 6 in.-gun competition at Fort Kelburne.

£150 out of Pocket—For Nothing.

The cost of the trip was something like £150, which was paid by the officers, non-commissioned officers, and men themselves. The half-company proceeded to Fort Kelburne, and were received with the liveliest astonishment by the Petone Navals, who temporarily accommodated their "surprise party" in their barracks and tents, the Petone men going to their own homes in the meantime. Yesterday morning a special supply of tents was sent out, and the northerners were made comfortable.

But there is to be no "shoot." The men are going home to-day, sorely disappointed. Before they go they will have an opportunity of witnessing a four-round instructional "shoot" by the Petone gunners as a preliminary to the Service Company Practice to be fixed later. This "service" practice now takes the place of the class-firing practice of previous years. So far as could be ascertained, the men themselves were under a distinct apprehension that the inter-company competition had been officially arranged, or they would not have gone to the expense and loss of time entailed in making the trip. That they actually undertook the expedition reflects the greatest credit upon them. The whole trouble appears to have been that the trip was made without the sanction of headquarters, which necessarily should have been consulted in a matter involving so much expense.

Colonel Robin interviewed.

Colonel A. W. Robin, C.B. (Chief of the General Staff), was interviewed with regard to the matter last evening. He stated that he had heard, to his complete astonishment, of the arrival of the Auckland gunners in Wellington. No application for permission to travel had been received from the company, nor had any official intimation of any kind reached him. He could not understand what the officers and men were thinking about to attempt to carry out such a scheme without permission of the responsible authorities.

The situation would be laughable in the extreme were it not for the obvious fact that the men, through some misunderstanding, have been induced to make an expensive trip which has failed in its object; they have had all their trouble for nothing, and may be excused for feeling disappointed and angry at the unexpected turn of events.