

*Captain Knyvett explains.*

Captain F. B. Knyvett, Officer Commanding No. 1 Company, Auckland Garrison Artillery, called at the office of the *Dominion* yesterday to state that the article which appeared in yesterday's issue regarding the visit did not present the facts in their true light, and was, in effect, somewhat of a reflection upon himself and the members of his company. Where the narrative was in error, he said, was in stating that the company had come down to hold a shooting competition with the Petone Navals, and also in the statement that the visit was unexpected. As a matter of fact he had been in communication with Captain Ellis, Officer Commanding the Petone Navals, for some time, and through that officer the company had been invited to visit Wellington during the time they were in camp. They had endeavoured to get passes over the railway for the men, but these had been refused. This was assumed by those in Wellington as tantamount to an announcement that they would not come south. But they were so keen on coming that even that check did not deter them. They had offers from outsiders to pay half the fares, and the officers and men did the rest. He and his fellow-officers had gone to no end of trouble to interview the employers of many of the men that they might be able to come south, and in a great many cases the men had sacrificed their pay on the off chance of learning something in the art of gunnery in Wellington. As evidence that the corps were not unexpected in Wellington, Captain Knyvett showed the following telegram received by him on the train:—

"Captain Knyvett, travelling South Main Trunk express, Marton Junction. If not on train readdress to Queen Street, Auckland. Arrangements made meet you. Proceed straight Ngahauranga. Wire 142 Willis Street numbers. Captain Ellis."

*To pick up "Wrinkles."*

Asked as to the reason of the visit (if it was understood there was not to be a big-gun competition), Captain Knyvett explained that for some years past the Petone Navals had held a high position in gunnery: their marksmanship was as excellent as their general efficiency. Naturally those keen on their work, as they were in Auckland, desired to note under what conditions the Petone men did such good work, and, if they could pick up "wrinkles" in gunnery as well as improve their none-too-satisfactory conditions. Surely that was a laudable ambition. Their wish to see the Petone men at work had only one aim—to improve themselves. It was pointed out that if that was all that was desired the same knowledge could have been attained by one or two officers or officers and men; but Captain Knyvett stated that they wished as many members to watch the operations as possible. In conclusion, he remarked that if a body of Wellington gunners had come to Auckland under similar conditions they would have received very different treatment to that which they themselves had received, and the misrepresentation of the facts in the paper had only made things worse. So much so, indeed, that most of the men, who were to have remained a week, returned to Auckland by yesterday's Main Trunk express.

*We came to shoot.*

Our representative had a conversation yesterday with one of the Auckland gunners, with the object of solving, if possible, one of the puzzles of the situation. As one of the men, can you state definitely whether or not you came down to Wellington with the object of engaging in a shooting match with the Petone Navals. "Certainly we did," he replied. There was no doubt in your mind about that? "No." Did you get permission to travel? "I suppose we did. We must have got permission, for the Officer Commanding Division came down to see us off when we fell in at the Drill-shed, and wished us every success." Have you any idea as to how this misunderstanding has arisen? "Some trouble with the Defence Department here, I suppose. Captain Richardson says it would cost too much to have a match. Another thing, the Petone Navals have got to fire for the cup, and there would not be any time for a company match." The men are naturally very disappointed. "Some of them are pretty mad about it," he replied.

*What the Petone Navals say.*

At 4.15 p.m. on Saturday our representative was informed, when the Petone Navals were paraded for dismissal, Captain Ellis, Officer Commanding the Corps, said, "There has been a lot of talk lately about the Auckland gunners coming down here. What I want you men to understand is this: Captain Knyvett tells me he is coming. The Defence Department tells me he is not coming. When the express arrives at Thorndon I shall not be surprised to see Captain Knyvett on board, and I shall not be surprised if he is not on board. That's all I can tell you about it." In the course of a conversation with Captain Ellis yesterday afternoon that officer said to our representative that the Petone Navals had expressed their willingness and pleasure to receive the Auckland gunners should they come to Wellington. "I might add," said he, "that I told them to be sure to get authority to come." Captain Ellis went on to say, "The matter was talked about at Auckland last Easter. Nothing further was heard here until three weeks ago, when I got a letter to say that railway passes and everything had been fixed up. I wrote back, stating that I was very pleased to hear that they were coming, and that the idea was a very good one. I impressed upon them the importance of having everything regular and official. In reply I got the following telegram: 'Propose leaving Auckland evening October 29th. Is that convenient to you?' In reply, I telegraphed as follows 'Yes, delighted. Please arrange officially with the Defence Department, so that I may requisition for tents, &c.' In the meantime I had heard nothing further from the Defence Department, and, in reply to my inquiries, was informed that nothing had come through from Auckland. It was necessary for the Auckland people to apply to headquarters for permission to travel in uniform from one military district to another."