

27. RIFLES AND AMMUNITION.

Seven thousand new rifles have been ordered from Home and are expected to arrive shortly. These, with the number already in the Dominion, make a total of 39,432 available for use. Requisitions for ordnance ammunition to maintain the regulation equipment, together with ample provision for two years' practice-supply for all guns, have been put forward. Arrangements are being made to complete the reserves of big-gun and small-arm ammunition, as recommended by the Colonial Defence Committee.

I have inspected the works of the Colonial Ammunition Company, and am satisfied that they are well organized and can cope with the immediate requirements of the Dominion.

28. DRILL-HALLS.

The existing drill-halls are totally inadequate, both in number and, as a rule, in size, for the increased numbers of men and boys who will be trained under the new scheme. It is indispensable that there should be drill-halls, for use in winter and in bad weather, at all centres which are the headquarters of a troop of Mounted Rifles, a section of Infantry, a company of Senior Cadets, or any larger formation. These buildings should be put in hand at once, and should be the absolute property of the Defence Department. The present system, by which many of the drill-halls are in the hands of trustees and are used for purposes other than drill, is unsatisfactory and is a great hindrance to efficient training. I will shortly submit definite proposals for the erection of a simple and inexpensive type of drill-hall at those places where they are required; also for the acquisition by the Department of those now in existence which are of sufficient size and which are held on unsatisfactory terms.

29. TRAINING-GROUNDS.

There have been set apart 23,800 acres in the Waimarino District in the North Island, and 8,841 acres in the Waimakariri District in the South Island, as training-areas. It is not intended to build permanent hutments or camps on these areas: they will be reserved for manœuvre purposes in the future. The principle of the Citizen Army that the men shall do their training territorially, and the practical elimination for the present of the General Training Section, makes the establishment of permanent standing camps unnecessary.

30. CLOTHING AND EQUIPMENT.

Tenders have been accepted locally for the supply of the necessary uniforms and boots, and their manufacture is now proceeding rapidly. Capitation grants will be paid for 1911-12 on the numbers of old Volunteers existing on 1st March, in order to assist units in clearing off their just debts. In future all recruits for the whole of the Forces will be clothed and equipped by the Government. Clothing-stores must be provided at once at Auckland, Christchurch, and Dunedin, and at many outlying regimental and battalion headquarters. Sixteen thousand sets of the latest-pattern marching-order equipment have been ordered, also sufficient Maxim guns to complete the equipment of all Mounted Rifle regiments and Infantry battalions in this important respect.

31. WIRELESS.

The question of obtaining portable wireless equipment for the Forces is under consideration.

32. AFFILIATIONS WITH HOME ARMY.

Proposals have been made for the affiliation of those British regiments who served in New Zealand in the Maori wars to regiments of the New Zealand Army, also for the affiliation of certain Mounted Rifle regiments to King Edward's Horse.

33. HONORARY APPOINTMENTS.

The distinction of Honorary Colonel has been accepted by the following:—

His Excellency the Governor, of the 9th (Wellington East Coast) Mounted Rifles:

Her Excellency Lady Islington, of the New Zealand Medical Corps:

The Right Hon. Sir J. G. Ward, Bart., P.C., K.C.M.G., of the 8th Regiment (Southland Rifles):

Major-General J. M. Babington, C.B., C.M.G., of the 5th Mounted Rifles (Otago Hussars):

Major-General A. P. Penton, C.B., C.V.O., R.A., of the 13th (North Canterbury) Regiment.

Sir James Mills, K.C.M.G., of the New Zealand Engineers.

34. NEXT YEAR'S TRAINING.

It is hoped that the posting of all those registered will be completed by the beginning of September, and that it will be possible to commence training these men during that month. Instructions regarding the posting will be found in Appendix E. The interests of employers and employed, the suitability of men for the various arms, and, as far as possible, the wishes of the men as regards the arms in which they wish to serve, will all be considered. The training will at first be most elementary and rudimentary, and no camps will be held till Christmas-time and after. The annual week's camp will be held by regiments and battalions, and, in the case of the Mounted Rifles, who are chiefly drawn from farming and dairying districts, the camps will not as a rule be held till near the end of the training season—namely, 31st May. A memorandum which gives my views on the manner in which the training under the new scheme should be carried out will be found in Appendix G.

I have, &c.,

ALEX. J. GODLEY, Major-General,

Commanding New Zealand Forces.

Wellington, 27th July, 1911.