

1914.
NEW ZEALAND.

DEFENCE DEPARTMENT: ALTERNATIVE SERVICE FOR RELIGIOUS AND CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTORS TO MILITARY TRAINING

(RETURN RELATIVE TO).

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Leave.

CIRCULAR LETTER ADDRESSED TO MAYORS AND CHAIRMEN OF COUNTY COUNCILS THROUGHOUT
THE DOMINION BY THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE.

DEAR SIR,—

Office of Minister of Defence, Wellington, 23rd March, 1914.

Conscientious and Religious Objectors to the Defence Scheme.

As you are doubtless aware, the Defence Act makes provision for the exemption from military service of those persons who satisfy a Magistrate that their religious principles would be violated by a performance of military duties. The advisability of providing similar exemption to those who on "conscientious" grounds seek to be relieved is now being considered.

In justice to those who in accordance with the Act carry out the prescribed military training, it is felt that some equivalent service of a non-military nature should be exacted from those who for religious or conscientious reasons cannot see their way to carry out their statutory military obligations. It is considered that it might be possible to employ those exempted on religious or conscientious grounds in work that might be of use to the community. The time spent on such work should be the equivalent of the military duties performed by members of the Territorial Force and Senior Cadets, and if in camp, pay and allowances should be given for an amount of work equivalent to that performed by those doing military duty when in camp. The General Regulations, from which the necessary extracts are appended, show the work for which it is sought to provide an equivalent.

At present the number of "religious objectors" is not considerable. There are only sixty-nine so exempted in the Dominion, but it is probable that when exemptions are extended to the "conscientious" objectors there will be an increase.

I should be most grateful if you could favour me with any suggestions on the following:—

- (1.) What nature of work would be most suitable in town or country? Would the local authorities provide work?
- (2.) What would be the most suitable method of supervising and recording the work done? Would the local authorities assist in the administration?
- (3.) Would it be possible to carry out the work as provided in Regulations 247 (excluding (d)) and 249 (excluding (c)) attached hereto? If not, how would you propose to allot the time for work?
- (4.) Any other points that may occur to you.

I feel sure that you will gladly second the efforts of the Government to equalize the duties of personal service in such a manner that all persons may, during the period for which they are liable to serve under the Defence Act, contribute a just share of work to their country without doing violence to their religious convictions or to their consciences.

Yours faithfully,

J. ALLEN,

Minister of Defence.

To all Mayors and Chairmen of County Councils on the 26th March, 1914.

EXTRACT FROM THE REGULATIONS FOR THE NEW ZEALAND MILITARY FORCES, 1913.

Obligatory Training.

246. The training-year will commence on the 1st June and terminate on the 31st May succeeding.

247. The amount of obligatory training to be carried out annually by all ranks of the Territorial Force, Reserve, and Senior Cadets will be as follows:—

TERRITORIAL FORCE.

- (a.) Thirty drills (twenty of which will be out-of-door parades).*
- (b.) Twelve half-day or six whole-day parades (all of which will be exercises in the field, except in the case of Garrison Artillery units, which will be exercised at the works of defence to which they are allotted on mobilization).
- (c.) Seven days' annual training in camp (exclusive of the days of arrival and departure).
- (d.) Prescribed course of musketry.

The prescribed course of musketry (d) may be carried out during (a) and (b).

Mounted Rifle regiments, and such Infantry companies and portions of such as are composed of men living in the country, will substitute four extra days' training in camp in lieu of twenty drills under (a). Such training will take place on the four days immediately preceding the annual camp laid down in (c). Rations and forage, but no pay, will be given for the four extra days in camp. The remaining ten drills may, at the discretion of the officer commanding the unit, be converted into whole- or half-day parades. The prescribed course of musketry may be carried out during the extra four days in camp.

All units and portions of units carrying out the scale laid down in para. 247—that is to say, those units who do not go into camp for four extra days in lieu of twenty drills—will complete their annual musketry course prior to the annual camp laid down in (c).

RESERVE.

248. Two half-day parades or their equivalent with a Territorial unit or company, &c.

SENIOR CADETS.

249. (a.) Fifty drills of one hour's duration, or thirty-four drills of one and a half hours' duration.

(b.) Six half-day parades.

(c.) Prescribed course of musketry.

250. In all cases the number of drills and parades, &c., performed will be entered in the Attendance Roll-books and in accordance with para. 242, and at the end of each year in the Record-books.

251. Programmes, &c., of parades, showing the times and places of parades in the Territorial Force and Senior Cadets, will be issued in advance by Company, &c., Commanders, with the approval of the C.O. The programme will be arranged as far as possible to suit the convenience of the employers and local conditions. Attendance at parades and drills so ordered, and at any other parades or drills ordered by the proper authority, is obligatory on the part of the person notified to attend. Persons absenting themselves without leave from any parade or drill ordered by the proper authority are liable to be prosecuted under section 51 of the Defence Act. Alternative dates will not be given in the case of parades or drills called under para. 247 of these Regulations. Voluntary parades may be arranged, but attendance thereat will be purely voluntary, will not count towards the minimum amount of training required under para. 247, and will not be entered in the Record-books.

252. At the end of each year individual N.C.O.s and soldiers of the Territorial Force, and each Senior Cadet, will be classified according to the degree of efficiency attained, either as "efficient" or "non-efficient," in accordance with the table given in Appendix XI. The classification will be entered in the Record-books.

253. No soldier or cadet will be eligible for advancement to the rank of non-commissioned officer until he has reached the standard of first-class efficiency, nor will any Territorial soldier be eligible for transfer to the Reserve, under para. 167, until he has reached the same standard.

Definition of Drills; Whole- or Half-day Parades.

DRILLS.

254. A "drill" will consist of one and a half hours' actual instruction, except that in the Senior Cadets a drill may consist of either one hour's or one and a half hours' actual instruction at the discretion of the O.C. Company, and provided that not less than fifty hours' actual instruction is given during the year under para. 249 (a).

255. Training performed at drills should be of an elementary character, and consist of individual or company training in the Infantry and the corresponding training in the other arms. The men will always be trained by their own officers or N.C.O.s, assisted by the Permanent Instructional Staff.

* Out of door parades may be carried out in the evening, and will not be devoted entirely to drill, but will include route-marching, outposts by day and by night, entrenching, signalling, driving, &c., and such work as cannot conveniently be carried out indoors. In the case of Artillery and technical corps, including Field Ambulance and Mounted Field Ambulance, the number of out-of-door parades may be reduced at the discretion of the C.O. The principle is that the drill-shed shall be avoided as far as possible.

256. Drills will be arranged and distributed throughout the year so as to provide a progressive system of training which should culminate in the annual camp.

257. Attendances at war games, church parades, funerals, guards of honour, or on street duty will not count as part of the obligatory training required under para. 247.

WHOLE- OR HALF-DAY PARADES.

258. (1.) A half-day parade, both in the Territorial Force and in the Senior Cadets, will consist of not less than three hours' continuous instruction in the open and during daylight.

(2.) A whole-day parade will consist of not less than six hours' continuous instruction by day or night.

(3.) Whole-day parades will be allowed to count as two half-days, and a half-day parade will be counted as the equivalent of two drills.

ALTERNATIVE SERVICE FOR RELIGIOUS AND CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTORS TO MILITARY TRAINING.

SUMMARY OF REPLIES RECEIVED IN ANSWER TO CIRCULAR LETTER DATED 23RD MARCH, 1914,
ADDRESSED TO ALL MAYORS AND CHAIRMEN OF COUNTY COUNCILS.

Borough or County Council.	If in favour of Alternative Service for Religious and Conscientious Objectors.	Suggestion.	Remarks.
Akaroa	Yes ..	..	No shirkers from military duty in the borough.
Akitio	Yes ..	Quarry-work, &c., or work not requiring constant supervision	Council will be pleased to help the Defence Department in any way possible and provide work.
Amuri	..	Fatigue-work at camps.	To be laid before the Council, and decision notified later.
Ashburton	..	..	
Bay of Islands	Yes, but not as regards exemption on conscientious grounds	Repair and maintenance of public roads	Council will assist the Government in any manner possible in carrying out any scheme so provided.
Bruce	..	Recommending that the Government find employment for objectors on various public works.	Difficult to arrange services in odd or half-hours; whole time should be given at one time.
Carterton	Yes ..	Town-beautifying under supervision of engineer or overseer	
Castlepoint	Yes ..	Council is willing to undertake to find employment, under Government supervision, which might be done by the local constable. It is desired that objectors should be allowed (or compelled) to carry out the whole of their substituted duties for any year at one time, so as not to have to be called up at frequent intervals.	
Cheviot	Yes ..	Tree-planting under Government supervision	No knowledge of any objectors in district.
Christchurch	..	..	Acknowledged, but no action to be taken.
Clutha	..	Camp cooks or assistants.	No objectors in district.
Collingwood	..	No recommendation	
Cook	Yes ..	Cannot indicate any particular class of work at present.	No sympathy with objectors.
Coromandel	..	Cooking or general rouseabout work.	
Devonport	..	Town-planning schemes	Anticipated that there will be no objectors in the borough.
Eastbourne	..	No suggestion	
Egmont	..	Afforestation and eradication of noxious weeds.	Council has no work suitable.
Eketahuna	Yes ..	Government should provide work ..	
Eltham Borough Council ..	Yes ..	No recommendation	All persons should render service during the time they are liable. Objectors should be disfranchised.
Eltham County Council ..	..	No recommendation	
Featherston	Yes ..	Cutting noxious weeds on Crown lands.	Supervision of objectors would prevent local bodies utilizing their services.
Feilding	..	No recommendation.	
Gisborne	..	Would be prepared to adopt any workable suggestion the Minister might make	
Greytown	Yes ..	(1.) Making track from Woodside (near Greytown) to Otaki. (2.) Planting trees. (3.) Serve out 100 or 200 rounds of ammunition to the men employed as above for target practice under supervision of their O.C. Companies (sic).	Borough has no work at present.

SUMMARY OF REPLIES RECEIVED IN ANSWER TO CIRCULAR LETTER—*continued*.

Borough or County Council.	If in favour of Alternative Ser- vice for Religious and Conscientious Objectors.		Suggestion.	Remarks.
Hamilton	..	..	Objects to finding work.. ..	Hopes the Government will maintain the defence system as at present established.
Hawera	..	..	..	Letter received. Little sympathy with objectors.
Hawke's Bay	..	..	Willing to employ objectors on suitable roadwork under the supervision of its overseers.	
Hobson	Yes	..	No exemptions should be allowed to conscientious objectors	Earnestly trusts the Government will enforce the conditions of compulsory training.
Horowhenua	..	..	Work about Defence buildings and camps, improving parks, recreation-grounds, &c.	In country districts to be under supervision of county surfaceman in eradicating noxious weeds and repairing roads.
Hutt	..	..	No suggestions.	
Inangahua	..	..	No recommendations	Cannot undertake any responsibility.
Kaiapoi	..	..	..	No action to be taken.
Kaikoura	..	..	..	Letter received.
Kairanga	Yes	..	..	Should be undertaken by the Defence Department.
Lawrence	..	..	Tree-planting.	
Levels	..	..	..	To again come up for discussion in May, when suggestions will be made.
Levin	Yes	..	..	Will use its best endeavours to find suitable work when occasion arises.
Lower Hutt	..	..	..	Question entirely one for the consideration of the Government.
Lyttelton	Yes	..	Improvement or maintenance of public domains or reserves	Cost should not be borne by local authorities.
Mackenzie	Yes	..	Stone-breaking	Day-work unsatisfactory. Would endeavour to assist.
Makara	..	..	Pick-and-shovel work in improving the main roads, and an area officer be placed in charge with one of the local-body foremen to assist in directing the work.	
Manawatu	..	..	Cooking and fatigue-work at camps.	
Marton	..	..	..	Conscientious clauses should not be included in the defence scheme.
Masterton	..	..	No suggestions.	
Matamata	Yes	..	Would provide work, and suggests road-repairs on main roads	Desires to know how men are to be paid and quartered. An objector should, if possible, be engaged in the district to which he belongs.
Mataura	..	..	..	No recommendation.
Miramar	..	..	Tree-planting or roadmaking ..	Prepared to find work for those exempted in district.
Mount Eden	..	..	Manual labour in connection with camps	Cannot find employment.
Mount Herbert	..	..	No suggestions.. ..	Cannot offer employment. Regrets that the Defence Act has been so amended as to allow men to claim exemption on "conscientious" or religious grounds.
Murchison	..	..	Improving public domains, recreation-grounds, cemeteries, &c.	Will provide such work for local objectors and assist in the administration by supervising and recording the work done.
New Brighton	..	..	No suggestions.	
New Plymouth	..	..	No suggestions.	
Ohinemuri	Yes	..	No suggestions.. ..	Willing to assist the Department in the matter.
Palmerston North	Yes	..	Ambulance-work.	
Pahiatua	..	..	No suggestions.	
Patea	..	..	Work on main county roads under Government supervision.	
Petone	..	..	..	Has no suitable work.
Piako	..	..	..	Considers defence system should be strictly enforced, and that conscientious objectors are of little value.
Pohangina	..	..	..	Letter considered and received.
Rangitikei	..	..	Planting sand-dunes and other waste lands throughout the Dominion under the supervision of the proper Department.	
Roxburgh	..	..	..	Does not know of any immediate work for which objectors could be employed.
Southland	..	..	..	Consideration held over.
Stratford Borough Council	..	..	..	Proposed scheme would not be workable.

SUMMARY OF REPLIES RECEIVED IN ANSWER TO CIRCULAR LETTER—*continued.*

Borough or County Council.	If in favour of Alternative Service for Religious and Conscientious Objectors.	Suggestion.	Remarks.
Stratford County Council..	..	..	Has no suitable work for objectors at present.
Sumner	..	No suggestions.. ..	Work could be found in the borough for objectors.
Taranaki	Yes ..	Tree-planting and planting grasses to control sand-drift	Such work would be useful in connection with defence, and delinquents should be compelled to beautify if they will not protect their country.
Tawera	..	No suggestions.. ..	Very few objectors in county. Youths appear to enjoy camp and are anxious to attend.
Te Aroha	Yes ..	Destroying noxious weeds.	
Temuka	Yes ..	Training in ambulance-work ..	Should be carried out entirely by the Defence Department.
Thames	..	..	Referred to General Purposes Committee for report.
Tinui	Yes ..	..	Will undertake to find work provided Government will supervise (local constable). Service should be performed at one time annually.
Vincent	..	Resolved that no action be taken..	Some members suggested employment on irrigation-works.
Waiaapu	Yes ..	Tree-planting in Government reserves or generally on work for the improvement of public parks and domains	Caretaker of parks, &c., might supervise.
Waihi	Yes ..	No suggestions.. ..	No objectors in district as far as is known. Defence scheme has Council's hearty approval.
Waikouaiti	Yes ..	..	Quite satisfied with the way the Government is dealing with conscientious and religious objectors. Cannot make any recommendation.
Waimairi	..	..	
Waimarino	Yes ..	Cooking and ambulance duties at camps.	
Waimate West	..	No suggestions.. ..	Every man should be qualified and prepared to defend his country if need arises.
Wairarapa South	..	..	Referred to Committee. Will advise later.
Waitaki	Yes ..	..	Glad to assist, but do not see how it would be possible to do so.
Waitara	Yes ..	Tree-planting	Borough foreman would supervise. No conscientious objectors in district.
Waitemata	..	No suggestions.. ..	No objectors should be allowed.
Waitotara	..	Fatigue duties at camps.	
Wallace	..	..	No action taken.
Wanganui Borough Council	..	..	Referred to Reserves Committee. Will advise later.
Wanganui County Council	..	Fatigue duties at camps.	
Wellington	..	No suggestions.	
Westland	..	Objectors should be deported, or lose their civil rights, or be put in gaol	Councillors spoke strongly against objectors, and are in entire sympathy with compulsory service.
Westport	..	..	Formal acknowledgment.
Whangarei	Yes ..	..	Such a course would be extremely difficult in its application, and somewhat unwise.
Woodville	..	..	Letter placed before Council and received.

Supplementary List.

Akaroa	..	Tree-planting or some similar work of general interest to the country	Understands there are practically no defaulters in this country.
Balclutha	..	Tree-planting and general beautifying of towns	Would undertake to supervise any work done in the town.
Buller	..	No suggestion	Appreciates the attempt the Government is making to deal with the difficult situation.
Cambridge	..	..	Cannot undertake the idea of employing unwilling workers.
Dargaville	..	No suggestion.	
Kaitangata	..	..	Not in favour of any exemption being made either on religious or any other grounds.
Kawhia	..	..	Not disposed to fall in with the suggestion, as in its opinion no exemptions should be allowed.
Masterton	..	No suggestions.	

SUMMARY OF REPLIES RECEIVED IN ANSWER TO CIRCULAR LETTER—*continued.*

Borough or County Council.			If in favour of Alternative Service for Religious and Conscientious Objectors.	Suggestion.	Remarks.
Mosgiel	..	..	..	Should not be eligible for any position in the Civil Service, or allowed to take part in land-ballots, and should be disfranchised.	
Napier	..	..	..	..	Letter received, but no action taken. Would be prepared to provide work such as gorse-grubbing, digging holes for tree-planting, and tree-planting, but would not be prepared to undertake any administration or supervision in connection therewith; also, is of opinion that it could provide sufficient work to meet the time conditions of training as set out in the regulations.
Onslow	..	..	..	..	
Otamatea	..	..	..	..	Is of opinion that persons who refuse to comply with the provisions of the Defence Act on conscientious grounds should not be relieved from their military duties, but should be compelled by law to carry out their military obligations under the Defence Act.
Port Chalmers	..	..	..	..	Letter laid before the Council for consideration and received.
Raglan	..	..	..	Breaking metal spalls into road-metal on contract or other easily supervised work	Work to be under Government supervision, and each man must at least break 1½ cubic yards a day.
Rodney	..	..	..	Employment on public works that suit each locality	The time taken by Territorials in getting to the parade-ground be taken into account in fixing the time to be served in lieu of training.
Ross	..	..	No opinion to offer	No opinion to offer	Quite satisfied to leave the matter entirely to the discretion of the Defence Department.
St. Kilda	..	..	..	..	Matter should be left in the hands of the Government.
Taieri	..	..	..	Exempted by making a capitation payment of, say, a sum equivalent to the cost per head of the defence scheme and time of training, such payment to be spread over the period which they would be liable to serve	Should not be eligible for any position in the Civil Service, or to take part in a land-ballot.
Tauranga	..	..	Yes	(1.) Ambulance-work; but objectors not to be compulsorily attached to any active military force. Efficiency to be determined by examination, and entered in personal-record books. (2.) Railway and road formation. Objectors to be mobilized in camps at suitable season	Employment by local authorities not likely to be satisfactory. <i>Re</i> (1): Distribute text-books in country districts where instructors not available. Annual gatherings to be held at centres for instruction purposes, and facilities for attendance as for Territorials extended. <i>Re</i> (2): Sections for formation could be selected in the various areas. At the same time, exercise in formation-work to be carried out under supervision of selected officers, and personal service entered in record-books.
Thames	..	..	..	..	Impossible to provide work.
Timaru	..	..	..	No suggestions..	Sincerely sympathizes with the Hon. Minister of Defence in his efforts to equalize the duties of those liable to personal service under the Defence Act.
Tuapeka	..	..	..	Be equivalently employed on road-work, and Council will find employment for its local quota and provide suitable supervision as suggested by the Minister.	
Waimate	..	..	Yes	..	Question is one for Department's sole control, and regrets in the circumstances its inability to render assistance.
Waimea	..	..	..	Fatigue duties at camps; and, further, that the services of such as are not required for that purpose be utilized in planting on the waste lands of the Crown.	
Waipukurau	..	..	..	..	Letter received. Council not favourably impressed with the necessity of providing equivalent service.

SUMMARY OF REPLIES RECEIVED IN ANSWER TO CIRCULAR LETTER—*continued*.

Borough or County Council.	If in favour of Alternative Ser- vice for Religious and Conscientious Objectors.	Suggestion.	Remarks.
Whakatane			Council has no sympathy with objectors.
Whangamomona		Objectors' names be furnished to the Council, who will provide roadwork in back-country districts	Council understanding that the Government would carry into effect further legislation to make the enforcement of such a scheme practically workable.
Ashburton		Grubbing of gorse and other noxious weeds on public reserves	Council will be glad to co-operate in any way in its power to further the smooth and satisfactory working of the Defence Act and its amendments. That camps be formed for this work under the control of some Government official. Council is prepared to find work of the kind suggested for any objectors residing in the Ashburton County. That the Council's Inspector of Reserves would assist such officials by pointing out the extent and location of such work, estimating its value, and in any other way in his power. Payment to be made direct to the Government for value of any work done.

Suggestion from Mr. Frank Dexter, "Holmfield," Wanganui East: *Re* proposed equivalent service being rendered by conscientious objectors to military training: As one specially interested from a religious point of view, being a Christadelphian, I have noted several suggestions that have been made by local bodies throughout the Dominion, and as to the nature of the work to be imposed. While some are inclined to suggest that the service to be rendered by conscientious objectors should be of the hardest possible nature, others are satisfied to suggest work on behalf of various beautifying societies. As one that has given some consideration to the problem, and looking at it from a national point of view, I would respectfully suggest that the labour of conscientious objectors should be utilized in afforestation. This would give suitable employment to all classes of conscientious objectors, and would also afford scope for the overseers to divide the work according to the capacity of the persons employed. It would also be furthering a much-needed national work.

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