

1937.
NEW ZEALAND.

DEFENCE FORCES OF NEW ZEALAND.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE GENERAL OFFICER COMMANDING NEW ZEALAND
MILITARY FORCES.

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

REPORT.

The Hon. the MINISTER OF DEFENCE.

Wellington, 31st July, 1937.

SIR,—

I have the honour to submit the following report on the New Zealand Military Forces for the period 1st June, 1936, to 31st May, 1937. During this period I have been only two months in command, but it has become even more apparent to me that the success of a voluntary system of defence depends largely on the support and encouragement it receives from the Government, the employers, and the general public. Without this support it can never reach a high standard of efficiency, and unless this standard is attained uneconomic expenditure is involved.

1. ARMY REORGANIZATION.

On assuming command of the New Zealand Military Forces on the 1st April, 1937, I was instructed to prepare a comprehensive report for their reorganization. This report was placed before the Government on the 8th May, 1937. It is designed to bring the organization of the Territorial Force in line with the numbers likely to be available under voluntary enlistment.

Since the introduction of voluntary service in 1930, there has been difficulty in finding adequate numbers to fill the establishment. The organization then in force was on a divisional basis. There was a complete Infantry Division, together with three brigades of Mounted Rifles.

When compulsory military training was in force there was no difficulty in filling these establishments, and there was always an ample number of officers, N.C.O.s, and men to enable units to carry out their training at full strength.

The strength of the Territorial Force is 7,900, and the attempt to carry out realistic training with such small numbers in a divisional organization has led to unreal situations, and has been discouraging to the officers and N.C.O.s with so few men to lead. It is also discouraging to the men themselves.

To sum up, the Mounted Rifles Regiments, with a full strength of officers and N.C.O.s, have only a strength in rank and file equivalent to squadrons, and the Infantry Battalions are equivalent only to companies, in some cases less.

I have therefore recommended that establishments be reduced from a divisional to a brigade basis as far as the Field Force is concerned.

Fortress Troops, however, will remain with a full establishment as at present. The difficulty of obtaining sufficient numbers to complete the establishments of such units will be overcome by enlisting men at each of the defended ports for a three months' period of regular service, followed by attendance at three successive annual camps of ten days' duration.

As the Territorial Force must be prepared in an emergency to expand rapidly to its original divisional establishments, the identity of all units has been preserved although their establishments have been reduced to squadrons, companies, &c. I intend to concentrate in peace on the training of the necessary number of leaders to enable this expansion to take place in the event of a national emergency. All officers and N.C.O.s surplus to the reduced establishments will be given annual courses of instruction.

Other proposals include —

- (a) Twenty days' annual training with pay, against the present twelve days :
- (b) Establishment of an Army School of Instruction for training of regular personnel, and a School of Instruction in each Command for the training of Territorials of all ranks :
- (c) Provision of a pool of M.T. in each Command to facilitate field training in suitable areas :
- (d) Motorization of all units (except Mounted Rifles) for annual camps :
- (e) Provision of a motorized cavalry regiment :
- (f) Modification of the system of cadet training.