

1874.
NEW ZEALAND.

NEW ZEALAND VOLUNTEER FORCE,

(REPORT BY MAJOR GORDON, OF INSPECTION OF).

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

No. 1.

Major GORDON to the UNDER SECRETARY for DEFENCE.

SIR,—

Auckland, 5th August, 1874.

Having received a Commission as Inspector of Volunteers for the past Volunteer year, I beg to report that early in December last I proceeded to Wellington, for the annual inspection of the various companies in that city; and as the result of such inspection, I had the honor to address to you my letter of the 10th of that month, which is annexed hereto.

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WELLINGTON.

In the Wellington District, the first corps which paraded was the Wellington Artillery Company; and in appearance, as regards uniformity of equipment, physique, &c., it is one which could scarcely be excelled; but I found it very deficient in its knowledge of squad and company drill, though expert in the use of its ordnance.

Its instructor was very defective in his knowledge of certain portions of the rudiments of his duty, owing perhaps to his having for too long a period of his Imperial service served in the tailors' shop of his battery. I explained to the corps that the description of knowledge of military duties required from an Artillery Company was very clearly defined in the form of efficiency certificate issued to each Volunteer who earned it, at the close of each Volunteer year, and that, in my opinion, the corps did not yet possess that knowledge. I advised the members on dismissal to look at the form of certificate I alluded to, when they would discover how simple were the requirements exacted by our Regulations to qualify as efficient. The officer commanding the company subsequently stated that his corps had, before my inspection, no knowledge of the document called the "Efficiency Certificate," and that such a certificate had never been issued to his corps during the many years of its existence.

I was not prepared to find, particularly in Wellington, that corps had been in the habit of receiving capitulation without having earned the "efficiency certificate."

The other corps of the city were pretty much in the same predicament and condition, and it was obvious that the occasions of monthly inspection, when the largest attendance is obtained, had been permitted to pass without any sound explanation or practice of drill having been imparted or adopted, and I very much fear that, at such parades, duties of mere ceremony were alone attended to.

The permanent staff-sergeant was not so well acquainted with his duties as a Government instructor should be, notwithstanding the numerous gifts and testimonials he was permitted to receive on his removal to West Coast.

A sub-district of Wellington is the Hutt District, commanded by Major Ludlam, with a paid Adjutant (Major Lockett), with only two companies of Volunteers—the Hutt and Wainuiomata Companies. The latter one I could not inspect, by reason of the impassable state of the road to its head-quarters after very wet weather. The former is a promising corps, but was unacquainted with what the Regulations imperatively require that every Volunteer should know, viz. a "knowledge of squad and company drill." On inquiring why this corps had not been instructed in these points, Major Ludlam intimated that he only permitted it to be practised in such movements as he considered would be useful on service. How Major Ludlam, or any other officer, certified under their hands that the men of this company were efficient Volunteers, and possessed a knowledge of squad and company drill, and thereby obtained capitulation for them, I cannot understand. This corps performed one or two movements in light drill with tolerable precision; but I do not think that the experience of Major Ludlam, or any other officer, with respect to what manœuvres would be useful on service, should be allowed to supersede what is expressly laid down as the course of drill in the Volunteer Regulations, and then to certify in writing that Volunteers know what they do not know.

In the Masterton and Greytown Districts, as Staff, two Majors, Bunny and Smith, and a paid Adjutant, Captain Cleland. These majors, I assume, hold commissions in which certain duties are im-