

1878.

NEW ZEALAND.

NEW ZEALAND VOLUNTEER FORCE

(REPORT ON THE, FOR 1878).

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

MY LORD,—

Militia and Volunteer Office,

Wellington, 26th September, 1878.

I have the honor to submit to your Excellency a Report on the New Zealand Volunteer Force, for the year ending 30th June, 1878.

The Most Honorable the Marquis of Normanby,
Governor of the Colony of New Zealand.

I have, &c.,

G. S. WHITMORE,
Colonial Secretary.

REPORT.

DURING the past twelve months the excitement caused by the disturbed state of European affairs has had the effect of stimulating the Volunteer movement in the colony. In the two Islands the increase has been 279 adult Volunteers and 132 Cadets; and, although several corps which had fallen below the minimum have been disbanded, six new corps have enrolled themselves.

The new regulations, which fixed a minimum of 50 as the least which the Government would recognize as entitling the corps to its capitation, have had the best possible effect; and the several changes by which *bond fide* Volunteer officers are replacing the permanent staff at all the chief centres of population have proved that these officers are quite equal to the duties.

The present strength of the Volunteer Force is as follows:—

			Total Adults.			Cadets.
North Island..	..	..	2,834	..	..	605
South Island..	..	..	2,674	..	..	1,575
Total	..	..	5,508	..	..	2,180

Of this total, there are 592 cavalry, 620 artillery, 404 engineers, 3,443 rifles, 449 naval.

It has been the endeavour of the Government to foster the artillery branch of the Volunteer Force; but the absence of sufficient ordnance has rendered it difficult to carry out this intention satisfactorily. In the future the defence of the colony from an external enemy—the only one, it is to be hoped, that will for the future threaten our prosperity and peace—will be chiefly confided to our artillery; and it is therefore the interest of the colony to give every encouragement to so important a branch of the Volunteer service.

Large guns are now expected from England, which, at our chief seaports, will be handed over to the Artillery Volunteers, and a certain number of guns will become available for corps at other places.

It is probable that when these new arms reach the colony there may be a difficulty in obtaining a sufficient number of Instructors competent to teach the several corps the use of those pieces of ordnance; but this difficulty can be got over, it is believed, should it be required, by inviting at most one or two qualified persons now at Sydney to complete the staff of Artillery Instructors.

It is in contemplation to form the Artillery Force into a battalion, with companies or detachments at the several stations. The advantage of this organization will be found in increasing the *esprit de corps*, and in bringing about uniformity in drill, dress, and system. The powerful and valuable arms which will be intrusted to the Artillery Volunteers will require great application to attain proficiency in their use; and, as the Artillery Volunteers will necessarily have much more work to do, and greater responsibility, it would be desirable to raise their capitation allowance, after the new arms arrive, by 20s. per annum.

The Naval Volunteers at many of the ports are not of much less importance to the colony. They are at almost all places desirous of obtaining guns, and anxious to learn their use. When the new arms arrive, it will be seen how far the Government can meet their wishes by transferring to them some of the guns now on issue to the artillery. Where the Naval Volunteers are intrusted with guns, it is proposed to raise their capitation to the same rate as the artillery.

The Cavalry Volunteers in the North Island undoubtedly perform valuable service to the colony at present; for, as they can be readily moved to considerable distances without much expense or preparation, they might be relied upon to reinforce the Armed Constabulary and local Militia at any point where disturbances arose. This enables the Government to provide for public security with a less permanently paid force than would otherwise be required.

The Waikato Cavalry, on the extreme frontier, is a case in point. If that corps did not exist, it would be necessary to increase very largely the Constabulary Force whenever any disturbance was apprehended. For many years the Waikato Cavalry Volunteers have maintained a high state of efficiency, and have been ready to move at a moment's notice to any point that might be considered in danger. The fact that such a corps existed has given confidence to settlers, and proportionately influenced the disaffected Natives. It has been necessary to treat this fine corps exceptionally, and during the past drill season an allowance has been given to all the force for the days actually spent in drilling—twelve in all during the year. With the prospect of peaceful relations with the Maori race, it is possible this outlay may prove unnecessary hereafter; but, in the meantime, it is an expenditure which is at once an encouragement and a true economy.

To insure uniformity of system and the proper care of arms, together with efficiency, it is proposed to appoint an Inspector of Volunteers, at a salary of £250 per annum. This office has always existed until very recently, and it appears absolutely necessary to revert to the former custom, if the Volunteer Force is to be at all properly managed.

A proposition is on foot in the Volunteer Force, to which it seems desirable to afford every practicable assistance. It is proposed to form a rifle association on the basis of that existing in England, with an annual meeting like that at Wimbledon. At present it seems probable that, if the Government will furnish the plant necessary, and the use from time to time of suitable grounds, at places selected for holding the meetings of the association, there will be no lack of subscribers to the fund; and that a Government *pro rata* subsidy would produce a fund large enough to insure a very satisfactory meeting every year.

As in everything connected with the Volunteer Force, however, the Government can only aid and perhaps direct to some extent, but cannot compel any organization, unless therefore the force itself takes up this proposal with a certain amount of unanimity, it cannot be rendered successful.

In conclusion, the total arms on issue and in store in the colony, and the total ordnance now here and expected, is shown on the accompanying tables; as also the corps already disbanded, and those below the minimum, and the total numbers at the present time.

I cannot close this report without making favourable mention of the Native Volunteer Corps at the Thames under Captain Taipari, which I had the opportunity of inspecting when in attendance on your Excellency during the autumn. This body of men is in no way inferior in drill or discipline to European Volunteers, and the men have shown great aptitude in acquiring proficiency in their arms. A second corps of loyal Natives has recently been formed, and when it has acquired the necessary preliminary training it will be placed on the same footing as the Thames corps. In relation to this subject, I may mention that I received offers on the part of a considerable body of Natives to enrol themselves for service at the Cape during the recent disturbances; and again during the excitement in connection with the threatened war with Russia, an offer of service of a whole regiment was received from the Natives.

Small Arms and Ammunition.

Rifles, &c.—

Sniders (all sizes)—On issue	...	...	...	...	...	5,023
In store	...	...	...	...	...	680
Expected from England	...	...	...	...	...	1,400
Enfields—In store	...	...	...	...	...	10,445

Ammunition—

Snider—In store	...	...	...	...	...	1,372,924
Enfield—In store	...	...	...	...	...	752,541

Cadet Arms—

Carbines	Muzzle-loaders	On issue ...	...	...	...	767
		In store ...	...	...	...	25
	Terry's	On issue ...	...	...	...	874
		In store ...	...	...	...	36
Ammunition	Muzzle-loaders—(Enfield ammunition used).					
	Terry	In store ...	...	...	...	41,267
		Expected ...	...	...	...	100,000

RETURN showing the DISTRIBUTION of ORDNANCE, 1st August, 1878.

DISTRIBUTION.	ARMSTRONG.			24-pr. Howitzers.	4½ Mortars.	Iron Guns, various.	EXPECTED FROM ENGLAND.
	40-pr.	12-pr.	6-pr.				
Auckland	1	...	2	11 7-ton guns. 11 converted 64-pr. guns.
Thames ... ..	...	...	...	2	...	...
Napier ... ..	...	...	2	...	...	...
Wellington ... ..	...	...	4	...	...	...
Christchurch ... ..	...	1	...	1	...	...
Timaru ... ..	...	...	...	1	...	...
Nelson ... ..	...	2	1	...	...	...
Dunedin ... ..	...	2	1	2	...	2
Invercargill ... ..	...	1	...	1	...	...
Oamaru ... ..	...	...	...	1	...	...
Port Chalmers ... ..	...	...	...	1	...	2
On issue to Volunteers	1	6	10	9	...	6	
In Store	1	11	8	
Total	1	6	10	10	11	14	

Volunteer Corps Disbanded since the commencement of the Volunteer Year, 1st April, 1878.

No. 1 Clutha Rifles.—Amalgamated with No. 2 Company.

Pauatahanui Rifles.

Tauranga Rifles.

Clutha Cavalry.

Services of Volunteer Corps Accepted since the commencement of the Volunteer Year.

Invercargill Engineers.

Greytown Rifles.

Riverton Cadets.

Sandy Mount Cadets (Dunedin).

Queen's (Bay of Plenty) Native Rifles.

Hawera Light Horse.

VOLUNTEER CORPS below the Minimum (50), 1st August, 1878.

District.	Corps.	Strength.
Auckland	Nixon Cavalry	38
Waiuku	Wairoa Rifles	49
Wanganui	Wairoa Cavalry	48
Rangitikei	Alfred Cavalry	38
Bay of Plenty	Cavalry	26
Thames	Native Rifles	44
Nelson	Cavalry	35
Canterbury	No. 1 Rifles	48
"	No. 5 Rifles	42
Oamaru	Hampden Rifles	45
"	Otepopo Rifles	38
Lake	Queenstown Rifles	37

RECAPITULATION.

—	Cavalry.	Rifles.	Total.
North	4	2	6
South	1	5	6
Total	5	7	12

RETURN of VOLUNTEERS to the 1st August, 1878.

District.	Cavalry.	Artillery.	Engineer.	Rifle.	Naval.	Total.	Cadets.	Remarks.
Auckland	38	85	79	417	100	719	85	
Waiuku	51	...	...	260	...	311	73	
Waikato	168	...	...	...	...	168	...	
Taranaki	50	...	...	61	...	111	...	
Wanganui	83	...	...	81	...	164	58	
Rangitikei	32	...	...	50	...	82	...	
Wellington ... ..	...	72	...	184	...	256	233	
Greytown ... ..	...	...	...	75	...	75	...	
Napier ... ..	...	61	61	...	...	122	34	Increase since 30th June, when Estimates were framed.
Poverty Bay ... ..	...	...	...	144	...	144	...	
Bay of Plenty	26	...	...	52	...	78	...	
Thames ... ..	...	...	120	347	137	604	122	
TOTAL NORTH ISLAND ...	448	218	260	1,671	237	2,834	605	North Island : Adults ... 220 Cadets ... 12
Nelson	35	59	...	65	51	210	164	South Island : Adults ... 59 Cadets ... 220
Marlborough ... ..	...	...	...	307	...	307	199	
Canterbury	109	112	54	140	...	415	87	
Oamaru ... ..	...	58	...	152	...	210	103	
Dunedin ... ..	...	73	...	639	161	873	744	
Invercargill ... ..	...	100	90	128	...	318	125	
Lake ... ..	...	...	...	147	...	147	61	
Westland ... ..	...	...	...	194	...	194	92	
TOTAL SOUTH ISLAND ...	144	402	144	1,772	212	2,674	1,575	
TOTAL ALL NEW ZEALAND	592	620	404	3,443	449	5,508	2,180	

Price 3d.]

By Authority: GEORGE DIDSBURY, Government Printer, Wellington.—1878.