

1879.
NEW ZEALAND.

VOLUNTEER FORCE OF NEW ZEALAND

(REPORT ON).

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

No. 1.

The Hon. Colonel WHITMORE to His Excellency the GOVERNOR.

SIR,—

Defence Office, Wellington, 10th July, 1879.

I have the honor to transmit to your Excellency the reports of the officers appointed to inspect the Volunteer forces of the colony during the past year, together with a statement showing the numbers at present enrolled.

From these reports your Excellency will be able to form an opinion of the condition of the several corps.

It is my duty to bring to your notice that volunteering has very greatly increased during the past year, and that the Volunteer spirit has spread widely throughout the colony.

Three very creditable demonstrations by Volunteers, at considerable expense to themselves, have taken place at Dunedin, Auckland, and Invercargill; and at each place it has been proved that a considerable body of trained men can be, at a very short notice, brought together from distant districts.

The Volunteer Rifle Association meeting at Nelson was a marked success, and will be, I trust, the first of a series of such meetings in the future.

It has been with great pleasure that I have received from the Thames, Wellington, Christchurch, Timaru, Oamaru, Temuka, Picton, Cromwell, and Queenstown corps offers of assistance in the event of any outbreak on the West Coast, proving that the military spirit created by the formation of Volunteer corps is a reality, and not, as is too often believed, only an illusion.

In order to foster the Volunteer spirit the Government intend to ask Parliament to follow the recent English precedent, and to increase the capitation grant on certain conditions.

Moreover, in accordance with the arrangements now being made at Home, it is proposed to invite the co-operation of the Force in rendering the clothing of the several corps more uniform; and, if possible, to arrange that at Volunteer demonstrations detachments of several corps may act in companies and battalions, with a similar dress and appearance.

As a step in this direction the Volunteer Artillery is now formed into a regiment, with the same uniform and system throughout, and officers have been appointed to it by election.

It is proposed to carry out further improvements in regard to this branch of the service, including a regular inspection by a competent scientific officer.

The Volunteer Cavalry has during the past year kept up its former efficiency. Your Excellency, while in the Waikato, having personally inspected the strongest corps, it is unnecessary for me to call your attention to its soldierlike appearance.

There are many other corps, not so numerous, but equal in point of discipline and efficiency, which will at a future time hope to be similarly honored by your Excellency's inspection and approval.

I cannot conclude without informing your Excellency that on the West Coast, as soon as our relations with the Natives appeared to be critical, and when the regular-paid force of the colony in the locality was hardly sufficient to inspire a feeling of security in the district, the settlers came forward so readily to enrol themselves for the defence of the country and to maintain law and order that in ten days the large number of 1,500 Volunteers were under arms and training.

I have, &c.,

G. S. WHITMORE.

His Excellency Sir Hercules George Robert Robinson, G.C.M.G.

Small Arms and Ammunition.

Rifles, &c.—In Store and on Issue on 30th June, 1879—

Snider (all sizes)—On issue	...	...	...	...	6,053
In store	...	...	...	...	866
Expected from England	...	...	...	...	3,400
Enfield—In store	...	...	...	...	9,642
On issue	...	...	...	...	1,788