

1881.
NEW ZEALAND.

VOLUNTEER FORCE OF NEW ZEALAND

(REPORT ON).

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

The UNDER-SECRETARY for DEFENCE to the Hon. the DEFENCE MINISTER.

SIR,—

Defence Office, Wellington, 1st June, 1881.

I have the honor to forward you returns showing the strength and distribution of the Volunteer Force on the 30th April, 1881, and of the ordnance and small arms on issue in the various districts.

The returns show a decrease of 17 adult and 9 cadet corps, and a total decrease in numbers of 1,325 adults and 966 cadets.

Of the 17 adult corps disbanded, 12 were in the Taranaki and Patea District, and formed part of those which had only been embodied in 1879 for the protection of the district, at a time when serious disturbances with the Natives seemed imminent.

As soon as the continuance of their services no longer existed, the men asked to be disembodied, so that they might be relieved from training and enabled to resume their ordinary avocations, which had been seriously interrupted by the threatened disturbances.

There having been no official inspection of the force during the past year, I called upon Officers Commanding Districts to report upon the state of the corps under their command, and their reports have been generally very satisfactory.

The attendance at drill has been good, and the interest in the Volunteer movement not diminished in consequence of the reduced rate of capitation allowed for the past year.

Facilities have been given for importing regulation uniforms from England, through the Government, on moderate and favourable terms, of which several corps have already availed themselves, and more are anxious to do so.

Camps were held at Easter in the Waikato, at Nelson, and at Oamaru, with considerable success.

The meeting in the Waikato was attended by a total strength of 1,017, furnished from all parts of the Auckland District.

At Nelson the muster was 526, of which upwards of 300 went over from Wellington.

At Oamaru the total number assembled was 1,166, representing corps from Christchurch, Dunedin, Invercargill, and Lake Districts.

The force is now well supplied with small arms, but the want of sufficient light ordnance for the Artillery and Naval Brigades is much felt.

I strongly recommend a revision of the Volunteer Regulations, and that the work be intrusted to a Board of Volunteer officers, of experience in the force, who would be best able to suggest what alterations are required to promote the interest and well-being of the movement.

I have, &c.,

H. E. READER, Lieut.-Colonel,

The Hon. the Defence Minister, Wellington.

Under-Secretary, Defence.

Return of Small Arms and Ammunition.

Rifles, &c.—In Store and on Issue—

Snider (all sizes)—On issue	...	..	..	..	6,883
In store	..	..	..	..	3,595
Expected from England*	..	..	..	..	500
Enfield—In store	...	..	...	...	10,326
On issue	...	..	...	...	1,322

Ammunition—

Snider—In store	...	..	..	..	1,265,884
Enfield—In store	...	...	...	...	204,592

* Since arrived.