

1883.
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, 1883.

Since the date of my last report on the Volunteers of the colony for the year ending the 31st March, 1882, the new regulations for the reorganization of the force, framed under your own personal supervision, were brought into operation on the 1st January last. The old regulations remained in force to the end of the year; the returns to the 31st December, 1882, showing a total strength, inclusive of cadets, of 121 corps, amounting of all ranks to 8,593, as detailed in accompanying return.

This strength has been considerably reduced since the 1st January by the disbandment, at their own request, of many country corps, who did not wish to continue their services, as no longer required for the protection of their districts, and also by the maximum establishment of all corps having been reduced to 63.

Attached are returns showing the strength and distribution of the Volunteer Force on the 31st March, 1883, and of all ordnance, small arms, and ammunition in the colony.

The provisions of the new regulations initiated by you for a thorough reorganization may be briefly summed up as follow :—

Volunteer corps to be divided into two classes, viz. : Garrison or head-quarter corps, and country corps.

Garrison corps, being such as should form part of the fixed establishment, the Government considered necessary for the service of the colony in centres of population.

Country corps, all others in out-districts.

The qualification for capitation for garrison corps : Attendance at twelve Government parades of not less than two hours' duration, one hour of which must be devoted absolutely to drill; four of these parades to be held in daylight; to fire in first and second periods of target practice, and go through the first and second periods of judging-distance practice.

Country corps to attend one inspection of arms, accoutrements, &c., in each quarter, undergo not less than one hour's drill, fire in the first and second periods of target practice, and go through the first and second periods of judging-distance practice.

No parade, drill, or inspection to reckon towards capitation in either garrison or country corps if less than two-thirds of the strength of the corps are present; an increased scale of fines for non-attendance being strictly enforced.

The maximum and minimum strength of corps of all arms to be as follows : Garrison corps—maximum 63, minimum 43; country corps—maximum 50, minimum 30.

Enrolments for untrained men to take place only in the months of January and July in each year, unless specially authorized by the Governor.

Recruits to be formed into squads irrespective of corps, to attend thirty hours' recruit drill, and go through the first and second periods of target and judging-distance practices before being allowed to join the ranks of their corps.

Capitation to be claimed for these recruits provided the period under instruction has not exceeded six months, and a free issue of a serge suit granted to enable them to attend recruit drill in uniform. Men who had previously received a military training permitted to enrol at any period during the year, but they would not receive capitation unless they qualified for it by attending the requisite number of parades.

Officers and non-commissioned officers to undergo an examination, before their appointments are confirmed, in certain subjects specified in the regulations.

Garrison bands only to be permitted in stations where there are four corps or upwards, of a strength in proportion of five men to each corps, to be under the immediate control of the officer in command of the district. Capitation to be granted to bandsmen who attend the proper number of parades, and Government assistance to the extent of £20 afforded towards defraying expenses of professional instruction. At other places, where there are less than four corps, although the proportion of five to a corps will still be allowed, no other assistance granted.

Volunteer corps above the maximum strength laid down in regulations required to reduce their numbers to the fixed establishment before the 31st January, 1883, and adopt such means, by ballot or otherwise, as would be deemed best to carry out the required reduction. Corps failing to do so before the above date to be disbanded, and new corps of the authorized establishment formed in their place.

Cadet corps, except those in connection with schools, to be disbanded. Regulation uniforms to be paid for as heretofore out of capitation, the Government obtaining them from Home on application from corps.

Corps hitherto designated Engineers to cease to be recognized as such. Naval Volunteers to be reconstructed as Naval Artillery Volunteers, on the Home system, to be trained at the four