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## REPORT ON THE NEW ZEALAND FORCES,

(BY MAJOR-GENERAL SIR G. S. WHITMORE, K.C.M.G., COMMANDER OF THE FORCES.)

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

The COMMANDER of the COLONIAL FORCES to the Hon. the MINISTER of DEFENCE.

SIR,—

Defence Office, Wellington, 25th April, 1887.

I have the honour to report, for the information of His Excellency the Governor, that I have carried out the inspection of almost the entire Volunteer forces, as well as of the Permanent Militia, and am satisfied that since last year the efficiency of all arms and branches of the defence forces has made remarkable progress. I annex a detailed account of the inspections.

The Act of last session separating the field force from the police has been carried out completely, and the Permanent Militia constituted under the Act has been thoroughly organized throughout its various branches. These are (men of all ranks)—Garrison Artillery, 120; Torpedo Corps, 50; Engineers, 20—all of which are, as regards their scientific instruction, under the superintendence of Lieut.-Colonel Boddam, who, however, reports to Lieut.-Colonel Roberts, N.Z.C., in general command of the whole Permanent Militia Force; the Field Artillery, 50, Major Gascoigne; the Rifles, 110, Major Tuke. The two latter corps are under their respective officers, but are, of course, equally with the other three branches, under the command of Lieut.-Colonel Roberts, to whom they also report.

The Garrison Artillery is divided into four batteries of thirty (all ranks), at each of the larger ports; each station, in addition, having its second-class torpedo boat, fitted with dropping and Whitehead torpedoes, sheds and stores, implements and appliances, with test-rooms, electric light (at three ports), tanks for cables and gun-cotton, &c., and detachment of Torpedo Corps.

The Naval Torpedo officer of the Australian station, Lieutenant Ottley, R.N., and Admiral Tryon carefully inspected our submarine preparations, and expressed a very high opinion of them, as well as Lieutenant Falconer's arrangements for carrying out the Auckland submarine defence, and Mr. Blackler's competence to manage our Whiteheads.

The Engineer Corps has been exclusively employed on defence works, and has proved itself to be composed of high-class military artificers and artisans. The Field Artillery is divided into four batteries, to work the field and fixed six-pounder rapid-firing Nordenfeldts, now on their way from England. They are, till these guns arrive, employed on the works of the unfinished fortifications. The Rifles are employed on the defence works, and in Native districts. They are subdivided into ten small sections called companies, so as to be capable of expansion.

The principle on which all these branches are organized and subdivided is the same. They are highly instructed in their several duties, and, as regards the scientific branches, consist of the smallest number compatible with the due care of the valuable arms, instruments, stores, &c., necessary for defence purposes, thus forming a nucleus capable of easy expansion should circumstances arise to render it necessary to use them in war. In each corps the men needing a special scientific training are now efficient, and those who would be further needed to complete them in war in order to work their guns, mines, boats, &c., could be easily obtained, not being required to possess nearly so much technical training. Moreover, some of the Naval and Artillery Volunteers are being instructed in each branch at the several ports, and in case of emergency could reinforce the batteries and submarine stations sufficiently to make them capable of effective action.

In case of war it, therefore, will be optional to the Government to call out the Volunteers for active service, or enrol the full number of Artillery and Torpedo Corps required in the Permanent Militia, or to do both to a certain extent. Meanwhile a reserve of Rifles is held available to support the law within the colony, or to reinforce the scientific branches if required for defences from without. The Artillery as at present constituted can only find two men per gun of heavy ordnance, including all ranks.

Lieut.-Colonel Boddam's report on defences, which have been entirely under his superintendence, and which have made marked progress during the past year, I attach herewith. I have to repeat what I said in my report last year in favour of this officer, who has done excellent service to the colony with very little scientific assistance, and that confined to officers instructed by himself. He has, in addition to his multitudinous duties, done good service in the charge of the Artillery and Torpedo branches. During this summer the former corps was assembled at Point Gordon under canvas,