

officers 46, rank and file 752; total 798: and absentees—officers 9, rank and file 274; total 283. Some of the inspections had to be carried out during shearing time, and others during harvest, which to some extent accounts for some of the absentees. The corps which from their drill physique, cleanliness, and general smartness deserve special mention are the South Franklyn Mounted Rifles, the Wellington and Wanganui Naval Artillery, the A, B, D, and E Batteries Artillery, Auckland Guards, Hawera Rifles, Hastings Rifles, Kumara Rifles, Rangitikei Royal Rifles, Waimate Rifles, and Wellington City Rifles; while of the cadet corps the Wanganui Navals, the Nelson College, and Kaiapoi Cadets specially merited my approbation. The mounted sword-drill in the Canterbury Yeomanry Cavalry and the Otago Hussars was very indifferent, and had evidently been neglected; and the Heretaunga Light Horse is in all respects very far behind any other cavalry corps inspected. The men's accoutrements and appointments were dirty, their horses ill-cared for and anything but fit for a hard day's work, and the officers and non-commissioned officers were, to say the least of it, indifferent drills.

23. *Corps not inspected.*—Owing to unforeseen circumstances the undermentioned corps were not inspected: Alexandra, Rangitikei, Te Awamutu, Waiuku Cavalry, Wairoa Light Horse, and Marlborough Hussars, M Battery Artillery, the Arrow, Bruce, Clutha, Carterton, Cromwell, Coromandel, East Taieri, Featherston, Greytown, Gore, Hampden, Kaitangata, Masterton, Naseby, Otepopo, Papawa (Native), Riverton, Riversdale, Tuapeka, Palmerston South, West Taieri, Wairoa, Waikouaiti, Waitahuna Rifles, and Canterbury Honorary Reserve Rifle Corps.

24. *Conclusions.*—To briefly sum up what has been pointed out in this report, the most serious fault, to which special attention should be at once paid, is that the officers and non-commissioned officers are the weak points of the Force, instead of the back-bone of it, as they should be; next, that proper equipment should be provided, with the necessary medical organization—but in settling what the equipment of the Volunteers should be, it is necessary to consider what duties they might ever be likely to be called upon to perform. The motto of the Volunteers is "Defence, not defiance." Now, it is a fact that if the colony were attacked, and the Volunteers called out, the whole time of their action would probably not extend over more than a fortnight; therefore, in providing them with equipment as a military body, it must be borne in mind that it is unnecessary to equip them as if for a protracted campaign. Volunteers require such important articles as a good plain serviceable undress uniform, a really good rifle and accoutrements, shoes, leggings, greatcoats, haversacks, water-bottles, and sufficient pouch-accommodation to carry an ample supply of ammunition, with signalling and ambulance appliances; and the capitation-allowance should be sufficient to permit corps to be equipped accordingly. The recently-issued drill-book clearly points to the fact that the attention of officers is no longer to be absorbed in the mere drilling of their men, they are now required to train them as well. There must be degrees of training—officers require to know more than sergeants, sergeants more than privates; and therefore it is to officers and non-commissioned officers we must mainly look. Though unnecessary expense is to be deprecated in every way, still care must be taken that the good ship "Efficiency" is not driven to foundering on the rock "Economy." That the colony possesses a very valuable body of men in the Volunteers there can be no doubt, but it is a matter of regret that so many employers raise objections to their assistants being connected with the Force. To this fact is to be attributed the great difficulty of getting men to ranges for musketry practice except on Saturday half holidays and bank holidays, or assembling them for daylight drills. To employers may be pointed out the unenviable position in which they would be placed if no Volunteer Force existed; and it is the duty of employers, as citizens, to aid, by every means in their power, their patriotic employes and their distinct interest to do so; for if the Volunteer Force is not supported, and greater facilities given to its members, the time may come when it will be necessary to call out the Militia—a far more inconvenient and expensive alternative—or to resort to what is now advocated by the highest military authorities in England—a forced conscription.

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A. HUME,

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#### REPORT ON THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE HARBOUR DEFENCES.

At the date of last year's report steps were being taken towards the general employment of convict-labour upon the defence-works. At Wellington prisoners had already been installed on the Peninsula in the barracks erected there for the garrison, these buildings having been converted into a temporary prison. In June last year the barracks at the North Head, Auckland, and at Tairaroa Head, Port Chalmers, were similarly converted, and occupied by the prisoners. At Lyttelton they began work on the fortifications both at Ripa Island and Battery Point in April last; but, there being no barracks which could be utilised as at the other ports, they were taken to and from work every day, returning at night to the Lyttelton Gaol. This system is now about to be altered, a temporary prison having been arranged at Ripa Island.

The extent of alteration and strengthening required to convert the barracks at Auckland, Wellington, and Port Chalmers, and the buildings on Ripa Island (originally intended for a submarine mining dépôt), proved to be very much less, as well in material and labour as in expenditure, than might have been expected. All these several buildings were on their first erection substantially and solidly constructed, and their internal arrangements were not in any case unsuited to the confinement and supervision of prisoners. The requirements of the gaol authorities for proper security were duly carried out to a large extent by the prisoners who were to prove them, who appear to have been also themselves satisfied, as there has not been any case of attempt to break out of any one of these temporary prisons.