

able cost. These remarks apply to corps at Reefton, Ross, &c. The money saved by the reduction of corps in perfectly useless and unjustifiable places is devoted to the improvement of those corps which remain. Instead of the present capitation per infantryman of £2, I recommend that the capitation should be £2 10s., and that an allowance of 10s. shall be made to each efficient man who is present throughout the Easter encampment; and for this capitation and allowance I consider that three of the so-called daylight parades should be whole afternoon parades, rendered feasible by the present Government half-holiday. If these parades are made useful, and the men are interested by being instructed in good work, outpost duties, attack, &c., they will, I feel certain, willingly respond to this call on their time.

8. INSTRUCTION.

As above indicated, the drill sergeant-instructors are, as a rule, quite behindhand. I propose that, of the thirteen at present doing duty, only four should be retained; and that six sergeant-instructors should be brought out to the colony from the Imperial service. These men should be changed every three years. Reckoning that their pay should be 7s. 6d. per diem, with house-allowance at £50, and making a rule that the appointments were only open to unmarried men, including passage-money out and back to England, the cost of the ten instructors that I propose would be little, if anything, more than the cost of the present staff, and the amount gained in better instruction, and therefore in efficiency, would be enormous.

The Volunteers would have an opportunity of seeing amongst them smart, well-dressed, and well-set-up men. The example thus given would be invaluable. Under no circumstance should one of these men be allowed to continue in the service after his term expires. Compensation on retirement would thus die out.

9. OFFICERS.

Considerable comment has from time to time been made on the system which prevails of election of officers. It has been without doubt the case that a corps could elect any person to the position of one of its officers. This power has in many cases been so abused that many men who would otherwise have come forward and made good officers have stood aloof rather than serve with or under men who were known to be inefficient, or to have no interest in their corps except as a step to other power.

To a certain extent the evil was cured by the institution of examinations for officers; but the amount of knowledge required to pass these examinations, though as much as could reasonably be expected from men who had no opportunities of instruction, is of such an elementary nature that it is no real test of efficiency, and is often learnt up for the moment and forgotten immediately after. On the other hand, a safeguard exists in the Officer Commanding the District having the power to veto the appointment of any individual as an officer.

This power has, however, seldom been exercised. It is a well-known fact that when so exercised it has been overruled.

With a battalion system a great deal of the difficulties above alluded to will disappear. The officer commanding the battalion will undoubtedly use his influence in securing good officers for the companies of his battalion, and will most certainly not accept the services of any one whom he knows to be unfitted or useless. He will be able to give great help to the Officer Commanding the District when the latter has to give his certificate that a candidate is a fit and proper person for a commission.

I have found the officers to be lamentably deficient in knowledge of field-work. The elements of tactics and outpost and reconnoitring duties should be subjects in which they must show proficiency before being qualified for a captain's commission. We should not be content until at least such work is generally known. Hitherto it has been impossible for them to gain the knowledge, as they have had no opportunities for learning. It would be part of the duty of the staff officer whom I recommend to give the necessary instruction.

10. BOARDS OF EXAMINATION.

There is a Central Board at Wellington, with Lieutenant-Colonel Newall as President. He has to assist him Major Messenger (for Artillery questions), Captain Coleman (for Cavalry and Mounted Rifles), Captain Falconer (for engineering), and other officers as members. It is the duty of the Board to prepare a number of questions on the various subjects in which the candidates have to pass. Four sets of questions are prepared for each year, to be used as required at examinations, which take place quarterly.

The officers commanding the other districts notify in due time to the President of the Central Board the number of candidates in their respective districts, and receive in due course sets of papers for each candidate. In each district there is a District Board, the commanding officer being President, and two or more of his senior officers members. It is their duty to receive the sets of questions unopened, to open them in the presence of the candidates, and to deliver the sets of questions to them as they are required. They receive the answers, and forward the papers, together with the result of the practical examination which is conducted under their supervision, to the President of the Central Board, who, with his Board, allots marks to the written answers, and issues certificates to those who have qualified. A candidate for commission as lieutenant is allowed at the same time to pass his examination for a captain's commission, the further necessary qualification being a certain amount of knowledge of battalion drill. I consider this to be wrong. Long before he becomes a captain he will have forgotten what he has learnt.

I found that at Auckland the Officer Commanding the District was not the President of his District Board, and that elsewhere officers who were in the position of being Presidents or members of Boards were in no way capable of judging whether a candidate knew his duties or not, and consequently men have been passed and have received commissions who a few weeks subsequently, at