

To His Excellency the EARL of GLASGOW, Governor and Commander-in-Chief,
New Zealand.

MY LORD,—

Defence Office, Wellington, 12th June, 1893.

I have the honour to forward, for your information and that of your Government, a report on the Volunteer corps in the South Canterbury District, which completes my report on the New Zealand forces and defences, and my recommendations as to the future organization of the former and the perfecting of the latter in so far as I consider necessary.

The inspection and work done by me have been under the guidance of the Hon. the Defence Minister, and have been carried out in accordance with his instructions as regards the various times. I reported on the 19th April, 1893, to the Hon. the Defence Minister, on the result of my inspections in the Westland, Nelson, and Marlborough Districts, and on the work done at the camps. Between that date and the 16th May certain work had to be done by me under the Minister's direction—submitting lists of corps which I recommended for disbandment, lists of officers no longer required under my recommendations, requisitions for war material and stores, and questions as regards the duties and responsibilities which would devolve on me on my taking up the duties of Commandant or of Officer Commanding the Forces.

It is necessary that these duties and responsibilities should be thoroughly understood and absolutely defined as part of the scheme for reorganization. I therefore take this opportunity, in forwarding the concluding portion of my report, to lay the matter fully before your Excellency and your Government, begging that it may be given the most serious consideration.

As regards my past and present position, I may state that, although I was gazetted Commandant on the 2nd May, 1892, it was subsequently arranged that I should not take up the official duties until after I had made my report and that it had been considered. This arrangement was arrived at during an interview which I had the honour to have with the late Premier, to whom I was introduced by the present Premier, who was then, as now, the Defence Minister, and was based on my reasons that it would be impossible for me to exercise the duties of Commandant while I was travelling over the country inspecting the various corps in a very minute manner, making myself acquainted with the condition of the various works and defences, and compiling a report involving much thought, time, and labour; and also that it would be advisable for the Government and Parliament to consider the report, to adopt it in whole, or in part, or not at all, so that I should be informed what the wishes and intentions of the Government would be before I should be asked to undertake the responsibilities of the discipline and efficiency of the Forces and of the defence of the colony, which responsibilities I most certainly look upon as part of the duties of a Commandant.

Mr. Bell, the late Defence Engineer, left the service of the Defence Department on the 1st April, 1893, and handed over to the Engineer-in-Chief of the colony his office, confidential papers, records, &c. In this matter I was neither consulted nor was I informed of the change until after it was completed.