

(5.) *With obtaining, holding, and issuing to all branches of the Permanent Militia and Volunteer Forces food, forage, fuel and light, clothing, arms, accoutrements, munitions of war, and all other stores necessary for the efficient performance of their duties by such Forces, of proper quality and pattern, and in proper quantities, according to the regulations governing the provision, custody, and issue of such supplies; and with exercising a strict control over the expenditure of such supplies.*

(6.) *With the construction, maintenance, and custody of all fortifications, works, and buildings, and charge of all lands, belonging to the Defence Department; and with allotting quarters.*

(7.) *With the provision and maintenance of horses and transport for the troops, and directing land and water transport.*

(8.) *With the collection and record of strategical and other information, including topography, in relation to the military circumstances of this and other countries.*

(9.) *With the preparation and maintenance of detailed plans for the mobilisation of the Permanent Militia and Volunteer Forces.*

(10.) *With preparing the estimates for all the above services.*

(11.) *And with the duty of rendering such advice and assistance on military matters as may be required of him by His Excellency the Governor and the Defence Minister.*

The first four paragraphs are intimately concerned with the discipline of the Forces, and no person could be responsible for that discipline unless he had the powers as therein set forth. Paragraph 5 concerns the efficiency of the Forces; paragraph 6, the efficiency of the works and fortifications, and the responsibility for the lands connected therewith, and of other Government property belonging to the Defence Department; paragraphs 7, 8, and 9, the efficiency of the Forces; paragraph 10, the duties and responsibilities of the Commandant as regards the estimates; and paragraph 11, his duties in connection with the Defence Minister, to whom he is the responsible military adviser.

It might appear at first sight that by this arrangement all the responsibility is absorbed by the Commandant; but in reality it is far otherwise. The Minister is the really responsible person. According as he follows the advice of his responsible adviser, and that adviser is capable, so will efficiency increase and the defences will become well organized; but, if he repudiates that advice, then the responsibility for the want of efficiency and the unpreparedness which is the sure forerunner of excessive expenditure in the presence of a scare, and of absolute failure in the presence of real danger, must follow. The Minister always has the power of curtailing the estimates and of guiding the expenditure, and is therefore the really responsible person in all except discipline, with which he has no dealings except to loyally support the officer whom he has placed in the position of Commandant, and who is absolutely responsible and not to be interfered with so long as he performs his duties correctly according to the regulations.

As regards the regulations, and the Defence Act of 1886, under which those regulations are drawn, I find that the Act does not in express terms provide for the appointment of an officer to the position of Commandant with the powers and responsibilities which I have set forth, and I recommend that the Government should take steps to cause the Act to be amended in this session, properly authorising the appointment as Commandant, placing all the Forces under his command, and stating his powers and responsibilities.

The present regulations are in many cases obsolete, and will have to be completely revised should anything be done to place the Forces in a sounder state.

I desire to state with reference to my own appointment: (1) That the Government of New Zealand took steps to insure that the highest military authorities in the Imperial service should be interested in the selection of an officer as Commandant; (2) that the Government then applied to the War Office for my services as Commandant for five years; (3) that my services were placed at their disposal for that period; (4) that an agreement was entered into between the representative of the New Zealand Government and myself in accordance with which I am to be Commandant for five years; (5) that I entered into that agreement fully believing that my duties and responsibilities would be based on the well-known lines which are laid down; (6) that I have been gazetted and have received my commission as Commandant; (7) that it will be my endeavour to fill that position with credit to the colony; (8) that I trust the Government will see fit to recommend to Parliament that the steps