

to establish at a small cost practice batteries of 64-pr. R.M.L. guns at Auckland and Wellington, practice from which can be carried out at a small cost, and instruction can be given in the technical work of a battery in action. Unfortunately, owing to press of work, I could not complete the arrangements for carrying out prize-firing by companies last year, but this I hope to arrange in time for this year's drills. With the exception of Port Chalmers Naval Artillery, all the corps carried out their annual training in the forts. Owing to the special condition of labour at Port Chalmers and the want of a proper launch, it has been impossible to arrange hitherto for this corps to carry out its training in their work of defence. This is much to be regretted, as the only gun they have to drill with at the Port is a 64-pr. R.M.L. gun, and the work which the corps has allotted to them to defend contains in addition guns of other calibres. I hope when we are able to transfer the launch "Ellen Ballance" to Port Chalmers that this state of affairs will be remedied.

Owing to increase of armament and the necessity for providing reliefs of gun-detachments, authority has been given to raise another company of naval artillery in Wellington. This matter is now in hand, and a second company of the Wellington Naval Artillery is under course of formation.

The corps of this branch of the service take much interest in their work, which is of a technical and laborious character, and deserve every credit for the time and attention they devote to their duty.

The title of "naval" is misleading, and, if an Imperial naval reserve is formed in the colony, will lead to some confusion. The corps are purely garrison artillery corps. They man the forts, and have nothing to do with floating armaments. In case of war we could not spare any of them from their duty in the colony.

SUBMARINE MINING CORPS.

The difficulty of training men in this branch of the service is great, as among the members of the submarine mining corps we require to have specialists well versed in electricity and in the manipulation of delicate electrical instruments, also with a knowledge of electric-lighting and engine-driving. The ordinary submarine-mining work also is quite out of the common, and a man requires special training to fit him for this work. The submarine mining corps go out to camp for sixteen days annually, but they can only devote their mornings and evenings to their military work. As it is extremely necessary for our defence that these corps should receive as much training as possible, the Government, on my recommendation, has allowed the corps in future to carry out daylight parades with detachments of not less than fourteen men. Such parades carry a personal payment of 2s. 6d. per head to the men, the total amount earned by the corps during the year not to exceed the sum which would be paid if the whole corps attended the six daylight parades during the year. The two corps at present in existence take much interest in their work, and I hope that this concession and the provision of suitable submarine-mining boats will greatly increase their efficiency and value. One submarine-mining boat has already been ordered from England, and provision is, I understand, to be made in this year's estimates for a second boat. One of these boats will be located at Auckland and one at Wellington. The present launch at Auckland is worn-out and almost beyond repair, and her condition is such that I have given orders that she is not to be used for the transport of men. The defence launch at Lyttelton has been sold out of the service, and we have to depend on hiring to carry out our work at that port.

INFANTRY.

The battalion organization of this branch of the service has been in force for the last two years, and is working satisfactorily. With country corps, the battalion can only become a reality during the time they are together at Easter camp, but in the centres battalions actually exist. I think the time is now ripe for this system being adopted in its entirety in the centres. In the four principal cities, where battalions exist, men should be enlisted for the battalions and not for special corps; and the question of clothing, discipline, and finance should be in the hands of the battalion staff. This would effect a considerable amount of saving of expense to the different units, and would facilitate instruction and administration generally. A difficulty exists in the fact that at present some corps are considerably in credit and others in debt, but this financial difficulty might be got over by the gradual amalgamation of company funds, to extend over, say, a period of three years, the funds at the end of the three years to be administered entirely by the battalion staff. I reported last year that full benefit had not been taken of the authority given to hold six daylight parades annually, with a personal payment of 2s. 6d. per man. This is very much to be regretted, as the intention in holding these parades was to devote the time to sound, practical work, for the exercise of which so little opportunity occurs. I should like to see the system introduced that I have recommended for mounted corps, a certain amount of the capitation to be earned as at present—each corps to be allowed to go into its own company camp for company training—the balance of the capitation to be earned by attendance at battalion camp; the men also earning 2s. 6d. per head now allowed for daylight parades.

Speaking generally, the officers are keen to learn their duty, and only want sufficient opportunity to perfect themselves in practical work. I do not suppose that there is any corps in the colony that has ever had any practical instruction in throwing up hasty entrenchments, and, the experiences of the present war having brought very clearly to light the necessity for such instruction, I hope that opportunity will be given for carrying it out.

The course of musketry-instruction should be made much more practical. Hitherto the allowance of ammunition has been at the rate of 150 rounds per man, 100 rounds to be expended on target-practice and fifty rounds issued at the discretion of the Officer Commanding the District for any purpose he thinks fit. This I propose to increase to 200 rounds, 100 rounds to be expended as at present, fifty rounds in field-firing under the supervision of one of the