

agreed upon between the Imperial and the colonial Governments. The pay of the officers and men when on service outside the colonies should not be less than that which is being paid to the Fifth Contingent at present serving in South Africa.

Strength of Reserve estimated at 10,000 men. Cost per annum. Australian reserve 50,000; cost, one million per annum.

Estimating the strength of our Volunteer corps at 18,000 men, we may reasonably expect that 8,000 of their number will enrol in the Imperial Reserve. This number, together with 2,000 men of the Maori race who would join the Reserve, would bring the number up to 10,000 men. Putting the capitation on those efficient at £5 per capita, the annual cost would be £50,000, to which must be added the pay during the time the men are in camp—say about £50,000 more. Therefore, there would be in this colony 10,000 men available, at an annual cost of £100,000. Taking it for granted that, in like proportion to population, the same number of men would enrol in the Australian colonies and Tasmania, and estimating the population of Australia and Tasmania at 3,500,000, the proportion would be 43,750 men. Added to the 10,000 in this colony, this would produce a Reserve force of 53,750 men, or, in round numbers, an Imperial Reserve of 50,000 men, at an annual cost of £1,000,000.

Major-General French indorses scheme.

The captious critic may look upon this scheme as chimerical, and I had some doubts myself when, on the 11th May last, in a memorandum to His Excellency the Governor, I first outlined the scheme; but since then Major-General French has expressed the conviction that a force could be formed on the lines indicated, and, seeing that the drilling and training in the camp of the Volunteers would count for that required by the Reserve, there is little doubt that the number estimated by me would be reached.

RIFLE CLUBS.

Formation of rifle clubs.

In respect of the formation of rifle clubs, a club should consist of not less than twenty or more than forty members; and in localities where Volunteer corps have been formed only ex-Volunteers who have had not less than three years' service should be enrolled.

Qualification of members of rifle clubs.

In localities where there are no Volunteer corps, rifle clubs may enrol members who have not had Volunteer service.

Parades and drills necessary.

Members of rifle clubs should, where practicable, attend a prescribed number of drills and parades in the course of the year, the instruction being in respect of handling arms and firing-exercise. The Government to supply rifles and ammunition to enrolled members of rifle clubs at cost price.

Certificate of efficiency.

After one year's enrolment members of rifle clubs shall be tested at target practice, and, on being able to make the minimum number of marks at the prescribed ranges and having attended the prescribed number of drills and parades, they shall be entitled to receive a certificate as being efficient.

Free ammunition for practice.

For the first year every enrolled member of a rifle club shall receive a free grant of fifty rounds of ammunition, and thereafter to every efficient member of a rifle club there shall be allowed a free grant of one hundred rounds of ammunition to be used at matches or at practice.

Free railway passes.

Members of rifle clubs also to have concession in the shape of free railway passes when attending rifle-shooting competitions.

CADET CORPS.

School cadets controlled by Education Board. Rifles to be furnished.

As has been stated by me in reply to questions, cadet corps should be established. They should be under the control of the Education Boards and the Education Department. A light rifle similar to that used in the Colony of Victoria should be provided for the use of, say, twenty of the elder boys in each school. The total number of boys who are in the Sixth Standard, or have passed it, is, say, 7,500, and the cost of giving one-fourth of them rifles would be £3,750.

Ordinary cadet corps.

In addition to the school cadet corps there are a number of youths in the colony who are not old enough to join the Volunteer corps, and the formation of these cadet corps and the enrolment of these youths would be of material advantage. The number likely to be enrolled is estimated at 5,000: the cost of rifles and equipment, estimated at £3 each, would make a total of £15,000.

From school cadet to Volunteer. Future maintenance of force of 20,000 efficient Volunteers.

The necessity for the establishment and enrolment of these cadet corps any one who has given this subject any consideration must readily admit. You commence to train the boys in the school, after leaving school they enrol in the ordinary cadet corps, and then, when they come of age, they will enrol in Volunteer corps. You take them from the schools and keep them under military training until they attain the Volunteer age. At the present time the lads, from the time they leave school until the time they attain the age at which they could be enrolled in the Volunteer corps, have their ardour damped, as well as their liking for drill; and this has been the means of preventing them from enrolling in the Volunteer forces of the colony. No such thing as conscription