

No. 2.

The OFFICER COMMANDING PUBLIC-SCHOOL CADETS to the Hon. the MINISTER OF EDUCATION.

Sir,—

Wellington, 1st May, 1907.

I have the honour to submit the following report regarding the public-school cadets. The statistics are for the year ended 31st December, 1906.

Organization.—Since last report further battalions, with their respective staffs, have been organized in Nelson (1), Greymouth (1), making the total number of battalions 30. The strength of the corps in the several education districts at 31st March, 1907, was 14,848, being an increase of 733 over the previous year.

It is very gratifying to learn from headmasters that the cadet movement has been an incentive to school discipline, and has led to the reduction of corporal punishment.

The institution of the "good conduct" badge (which deals purely with school discipline) has been a means of rewarding deserving cadets. The badge is issued annually on the following conditions: viz., to cadets for—(a) Regular attendance at the school during the year; (b) general cleanliness and good behaviour at school; (c) not having been guilty of any distinct act of disobedience to any superior officers or teachers, as a cadet or otherwise; (d) good behaviour in going to or returning from school; and (e) not smoking. Any cadet in possession of a "good-conduct" badge is liable to forfeit the same for any breach of the above conditions, or for any other offence of which he may be found guilty, either by the headmaster or the officer commanding his corps. The forfeiture of the badge may be for a defined period, or permanently, as the headmaster may think fit, and his decision is to be final in all cases, after due inquiry has been made into the alleged offence. The badge is to be worn on the left wrist, with the point uppermost.

It has also been found that on cadets leaving their schools they eagerly seek the certificate of discharge, which they find becomes a passport towards their obtaining employment. The form of certificate is as follows:—"New Zealand Public-school Cadets.—Certificate of Discharge.—This is to certify that _____ was enrolled in the _____ Public-school Cadet Corps on the _____ day of _____ 190____, and that he completed _____ years and _____ months' service. His character and conduct during the above period were _____, _____, Headmaster. _____, Officer Commanding Corps."

There is no question as to the benefits which have accrued in the shape of discipline, cleanliness, order, and tidiness generally through the advent of the cadet movement, not only at schools but also at home. Apart from the training of the cadet in the use of the rifle and drill, the schools benefit in the manner indicated above.

The illustrations accompanying "Infantry Training for Public-school Cadets," "The Firing Exercises," and "Physical Drill with Arms," are given in the Appendix.

Inspection of Corps.—The inspection of the corps in the Taranaki, Wanganui, and Hawke's Bay districts was completed during the year, but time did not permit of the inspection of the Wellington City and suburbs corps, but this was done at the cadet camp at Christchurch. It is pleasing to report that in every case the inspections were highly satisfactory, and in many cases high marks of classification were awarded. The following are the heads under which the corps are classified: General appearance, words of command, rifle exercise, firing exercise, marching, steadiness, bugling, skirmishing, signalling, and drill generally. It is proposed to include physical drill with arms in future.

Equipment.—Sufficient quantity was imported to meet all requirements, and for further issues.

Ammunition.—It is pleasing to be able to report that the ammunition supplied by the Colonial Ammunition Company has given every satisfaction, and not a single complaint regarding it has been received.

Result of Shield Competition.—The results for 1906 are given in Table I. It is satisfactory to see the improvement which has taken place in the scores made. In 1903 the highest score was 673, in 1904 it was 711, in 1905 it was 735, and in 1906 it was 747, equal to 74.7 per team.

Class-firing.—The results of the class-firing are the best yet made, and this is no doubt due as much to the encouragement afforded by headmasters as to the fact that payment of capitation was made dependent upon this most important part of the cadet's training. It will be seen by the return below (Table II) that some exceptionally good shooting was done by several cadets, an excellent record being that of Sergeant Grey, of the Pahiatua corps, who made 83 points out of a possible 84.

Colonial Ammunition Company's Prizes.—Competitions for these prizes have not been taken up as was anticipated. It is to be hoped that, as attention has been called to the matter, officers commanding corps will take more interest in the competitions this year.

The "Weekly Press" Prizes.—The challenge shields presented by the *Weekly Press* Company were exhibited at the late New Zealand Industrial Exhibition, and that for the South Island was won by the Waimate District High School Cadets in competition against ten other corps. With the shields a medal is presented to each member of the winning team. A modification of the conditions for competition will have to be made in order to get a greater number of competitors in the future.

Army Signalling.—Since last year a further number of cadets have passed their examination in army signalling, and they have been awarded the badges and certificates accordingly. Band-boy A. Fraser, of the Weraroa Cadets, signalled a message to Lord Roberts, V.C., on the occasion of Mr. West taking a cinematographic picture of the 3rd Wellingtons at Christchurch.

Buglers Manual, 1906.—This has been issued to all corps, and the various calls have been brought up to date in accordance with the Imperial service ones.

Miniature Rifles.—The 310 miniature rifles supplied by Messrs. Wesley Richards and Co., of London, continue to give entire satisfaction as to accuracy, &c. It has been decided to procure a number of barrels to replace those which are considered unfit for further service, seeing that they have been in use for over four years. There will be no difficulty in affixing the barrels in the colony, as the rifles are made on the "interchangeable" system.