

## REPORT OF THE INSPECTOR OF MILITIA AND VOLUNTEERS.

Lieut.-Colonel HARRINGTON to the Hon. D. McLEAN.

SIR,—

Militia and Volunteer Office, Wellington, 1st July, 1871.

I have the honor to report that, on receipt of your letter informing me of my appointment as Inspector of Militia and Volunteers, I proceeded to Wellington in October last, and assumed the duties of that office.

As the Militia and Volunteer Forces differ so essentially in the two Islands, from the fact that in some districts of the North Island the Militia are called out either for actual service or training and exercise, while in the South Island the Militia have never been embodied, I purpose dividing my annual report into two separate classifications—Militia and Volunteers.

### MILITIA.

The following districts were called out under the new Militia Act of 1870.

<i>Actual Service.</i>	<i>Training and Exercise.</i>
Wairoa (Auckland)	North Napier
Waiuku	South Napier
Hamilton	Wairoa (Hawke's Bay)
Cambridge	Rangitikei
Alexandra	Greytown
White Cliffs	Masterton
New Plymouth	Wellington.
Cape Egmont	
Patea	
Wanganui	
Poverty Bay	
Opotiki	
Tauranga.	

The Militia on active service and pay were reduced to the following strength in November last:—  
Officers and men: Taranaki, 40; Patea, 48; Poverty Bay, 12.

These men were retained for the purpose of affording protection to the settlers in the exposed parts of their respective districts, holding the blockhouses and scouting.

In order to facilitate the better working of all matters connected with the Militia and Volunteers, a period of twelve months, commencing on the 1st April, and ending 31st March, has been called the "Volunteer year." Officers commanding districts have been directed to furnish an annual report on the general state of the Militia and Volunteers under their command. As the new Militia Act did not come into operation till November, the time over which this year's report extends is very limited.

In the districts called out for "actual service" it has been left to the discretion of the commanding officers to drill the men, or only parade them quarterly for inspection of arms, according to local circumstances; but in those called out for training and exercise, drill has taken place once a month. The working of the Militia Act is very unequal, owing to the varied occupations of the people, the distance they may have to come to parade, &c. In or near the centres of population little or no hardship is caused by attendance at drill; whilst in those country districts where the population is greatly scattered, the Militia are put to much inconvenience, loss of time, and expense, in having to travel long distances for parade. In some districts the want of roads and the difficult nature of the country render it almost impossible to fix upon any convenient place for the muster of a sufficient number of men for instruction.

These remarks are particularly applicable to many parts of South Napier, Masterton, and Greytown, where, during my late inspection, I saw the great difficulty the Staff had to encounter in trying to train men under such disadvantageous circumstances.

Whilst visiting these and other districts, I endeavoured to ascertain the opinions of the people regarding the time and mode of training, and found that all differed; some wishing to be trained for a fixed number of days consecutively in the year, for which they would expect to be paid; whilst others preferred to be drilled once a month, as now, or twice in one day every other month.

At Napier the Militia have not been out for training and exercise since March, 1869; and, as the few drills they have undergone since they were called out in January have been performed without any addition to the Staff, they know but little.

The Militia are composed of eight companies in North Napier, of which four are in the town, and the remainder at Puketapu, Meanee, Clive, and Havelock, amounting to 470 men; whilst South Napier has four companies—at Hampden, Waipawa, Waipukurau, and Porangahau—amounting to 256 men. These have to meet at nineteen different places for drill, many of them at long distances from each other.

It could scarcely be expected that much progress could be made in a short time in so extensive a district, where the Adjutant, with the assistance of only one drill-instructor, had large numbers of men under instruction for only two hours a month, and especially as many have had few opportunities of acquiring any previous knowledge of drill. The difficulty of teaching so many men with such a limited number of instructors is great, and is enhanced in this district by the scattered nature of the population.