

posed upon them by His Excellency the Governor, but neither of them ever appear on parade, so that I had no opportunity of forming an opinion as to their qualifications to hold commands. A glance at the annexed returns will show how attenuated is the strength of the corps under their charge, and with so few men drill is out of the question.

The Masterton Rifles, however, passed creditably, as, in a lesser degree, did the Carterton Rifles. When I inquired from the members of the other small corps of these districts, why they had not transferred themselves to other larger companies, their reply was "that they were holding on to see what would turn up." I suspect that if there were a smaller number of majors, or no majors at all, in the Wellington, Masterton, and Greytown Districts, an improved state of things would be brought about. These districts might very well be amalgamated, with a staff of 1 commanding officer and 2 suitable drill-sergeants, instead of embracing, as at present, 1 lieutenant-colonel, 4 majors, 1 captain, and 2 sergeants.*

OTAGO.

Appendix 2 in
No. 1.

On inspecting this district, I found Volunteer matters in general in so unsatisfactory a state that I transmitted to the Government an interim report, which is hereto annexed. This interim report does not, however, treat of the corps which can honestly claim some pretensions to efficiency. That which I considered to be in the best condition was the Bruce Rifles at Tokomairiro, and its state is all the more creditable to its captain and officers, seeing that it does not avail itself of the services of any Government Instructor. The Dunedin City Guards I found also in good order, as well as its affiliated company of Cadets. The Dunedin Artillery Company showed a very small attendance, exclusive of its good band, but those present were expert in the use of their guns. The corps is well clothed, has a very superior band, and its funds exhibit a credit, inclusive of the value of band instruments, of something like £500. Were it not for these circumstances, as well as from the fact that in its private rules it has one which operates unfavourably in the way of obtaining recruits, and which it had determined to rescind, with the consent of the Governor, I would have asked for a discontinuance of its services; and I would have been supported in the request by the captain of the company, who complained bitterly that his efforts to obtain a large and more regular attendance at parade had been unsuccessful.

The Invercargill Artillery Company appeared to be a promising corps, and made a request to be supplied with more suitable guns than they at present possess.

The Invercargill Rifles is also a promising corps, and the officers of these two companies desired that they (the two corps) should be placed under a captain commandant, as is permitted by the 17th clause of "The Volunteer Act, 1865." If these corps are still of the same mind, I would recommend that their request be acceded to.

The Portobello Rifles is said by the Adjutant of the district to be an excellent corps, but I only saw a portion of it, owing to the steamer by which I proceeded to Portobello arriving one hour after its usual time.

The Naval Companies of Dunedin and Port Chalmers are failures, and so also are the Cadet companies of the district, with the exception of the City Guards and Oamaru Corps. The remaining Cadet companies could not be produced for inspection.

The greater number of corps in Otago scarcely approach mediocrity in knowledge of drill, and it can hardly be expected that they should, when it is considered that in the province there are thirty-seven companies, located over an area impossible of supervision, and some of them in quarters which are almost inaccessible. There is one, for instance, at Orepuki, which is twenty-eight miles distant from Riverton by a foot track, or thirty-three by horse track. Owing to this difficulty of access, and the circumstance that the company had only been in existence for two months, I did not visit Orepuki; nor did I visit the Queenstown (late Wakatipu) Company, distant from Dunedin five days' journey by coach, and I am persuaded that I would not have seen anything to justify the expense attaching to such a journey; besides the corps had not been armed, nor had it ever been seen by any member of the local staff. The services of this corps had been accepted and gazetted without the intervention or recommendation of the Officer Commanding the district, who seemed to look upon it as hardly under his command, for he styled it "The Superintendent's Company," whatever that may mean.

In my interim report on Otago, I have recommended that the commissions of Majors Bathgate, Jones, and Steward shall lapse or be cancelled, for not having fulfilled (or being unable to do so) the requirements of their commissions.

On the resignation of Lieut.-Colonel Cargill, Major Bathgate assumed the command in Otago; but on my recommendation he was superseded, by the Warrant of His Excellency the Governor, in favour of Major Atkinson, the paid staff officer.

CANTERBURY.

In this district, the corps of which I can speak in commendatory terms are the Yeomanry Cavalry, the Christchurch Artillery, the No. 1 Engineers, and the City Guards. The No. 2 Engineers, at Heathcote, 29 strong on its roll, produced only two men, one of whom was very drunk. This corps will, I conclude, be disbanded. The Timaru Artillery Company was in a very unsatisfactory state. Only 11 of all ranks paraded, with 9 musicians; and attached to it is a Cadet Company, numbering 21, but only 7 were present.

The Lyttelton Artillery Company, though few in number, acquitted itself well, and asked to be supplied with heavy garrison guns (of which there are many in Auckland not in use), in lieu of field-pieces, in order to place them in position as a standing battery on an escarpment on the heights overlooking the harbour. I would advise that their request be complied with, so that their 6-pounder Armstrong may be made available by some other corps. The other companies of this district are located in the country, and the Commanding Officer represented that it would be impossible to obtain a muster in January (the month of my visit), as every available man was engaged in harvesting.

* For observations of the Officer Commanding the Wellington District on the above Report, see Appendix No. 2.