

WESTLAND.

Of the three companies in this district, two—the 1st Westland and Greymouth Rifles—are a fine body of men, and in excellent order; but the Totara Company, at Ross, were quite astray at drill of any sort, and there were 35 of their number absent. I think it will be found to be useless, or at least difficult, to retain a corps at Ross, by reason of the unsettled occupation of its residents.

NELSON.

With the exception of the corps in out-districts, the companies here are in a very creditable state. The Artillery Company is a new one, and, unlike many other companies of a similar arm, it has not neglected its infantry duties by confining itself exclusively to gun drill.

The City Rifles and City Cadet Company are in as good order as the Artillery Company, and besides performing well and steadily ordinary company movements, all their companies requested me to manoeuvre them in battalion drill, in which they acquitted themselves in every way to my satisfaction.

The Stoke Rifles, Stoke Cadets, Waimea Rifles, and Wakefield Cadets, moved very indifferently.

MARLBOROUGH.

I made two attempts to see the corps in this province—the first in January, when the Commanding Officer assured me that musters of his men could not be obtained, owing to their being dispersed in harvesting operations. On the second occasion, in the month of June, parades had been ordered, and had actually taken place; but the steamer by which I proceeded from the Manukau was detained, bar-bound, for two days, and consequently I could not reach Picton at the appointed time, and when I did subsequently arrive I could not reasonably order fresh parades.

These three last-named districts of Westland, Nelson, and Marlborough, are without paid commanding officers. I think the service would be benefited if they were made one district under an active officer—one capable of imparting instruction. Nelson particularly, although it is possessed of a very efficient drill-sergeant, requires the supervision of a competent officer, and the Volunteers there deserve one.

WANGANUI.

Of the three corps in this district I am able to speak very favourably. The Wanganui Rifles were able to perform every movement required of them with great steadiness, and I had not seen the "bayonet exercise" gone through so smartly as it was done by this company, which also seemed to have paid special attention to class firing, for it had 25 marksmen in its ranks. The Cadet Company promises to be a good one, and appeared to take much pleasure in skirmishing. The Alexandra Cavalry are expert riders, and, after executing the ordinary movements of parade, performed sword pursuing practice over a series of fences which they had erected for the purpose, without any mishap—a feat not likely to be attempted successfully by any but corps who reside altogether in country districts, and who ride their own horses.

RANGITIKEI.

I was fortunate in finding three troops of Cavalry, four companies of Infantry, and one Cadet Company of this district, assembled at Marton on the 27th of June to witness the presentation of the Cadet Champion Belt to Ensign Chapman, of the Cadet Company, and took advantage of their presence for a very extended drill inspection. With this force on the ground, company, battalion, and even brigade drill were indulged in, and the various corps behaved exceedingly well, being evidently much pleased at having the opportunity of taking part in a more advanced description of drill than they had been accustomed to. These Cavalry corps, like that at Wanganui, are fit in every respect for any field service which might be required from them, and for employment in their own district their services would be invaluable.

I should here state that these mounted corps had very recently been assembled for consecutive training by Major Noake, commanding at Wanganui, and it is to this circumstance I attribute their having acquitted themselves so well on the parade I have alluded to.

The remaining corps of this district I had not an opportunity of seeing—namely, the Lady Bowen Troop and the Manawatu Rifles. The officer commanding this district was absent on leave, but he possesses a very suitable deputy in Lieutenant Heywood, the drill instructor.

PATEA.

In consequence of extremely wet weather, short notice, &c., I could not see the three companies of this district in passing through it, namely, the Hawera Troop, the Patea Rifles, and the Wairoa Rifles.

The two first-named are not clothed yet, and I am afraid, from the small and scattered population of the district, that Volunteers here will not be successful in acquiring a large degree of efficiency, as occurred in the Wairoa Light Horse, which, although it numbered thirty men, did not return one efficient Volunteer.

TARANAKI.

There are here three corps, the Taranaki Light Horse, the Egmont Rifles, and a Cadet Company. The first-named, though not so advanced in their knowledge of military duties as the Cavalry corps of Wanganui and Rangitikei, bids fair to soon attain the same state of efficiency: they are well mounted and perform mounted drill very fairly, but have not yet had any dismounted drill, which I directed should be commenced.

The Egmont Rifles should be in a much better state than that in which I found them. Their commanding officer is a very capable one, and I think quite agreed with me that his men were scarcely