

some difference with his men, resigned, and a number of the members followed his example, threatening at the time the disbandment of the corps, but through the exertions of Mr. McKirdy, the acting captain, it had now recovered to a respectable strength, although both officers and men required considerable training, the former being only acting, and the latter mostly recruits. The muster was good, but some were in one uniform, others in another, and the remainder in plain clothes. New uniform had been ordered, but could not be ready for two months, as the manufacturer could not supply the tweed for some time. Major Gordon, after inspecting this raw material, placed the company under command of one of the acting subalterns, and the result was of course unsatisfactory. One-half of these men are very fairly proficient, and have been drilled by myself apart from the recruits, the latter being handed over to the staff sergeant for primary instruction. The whole being drilled together, and by an officer not qualified for the task, was fatal.

With respect to Major Gordon's charge that the men are only partially trained,—every movement of service to a company of Volunteers they have been instructed in. Forming squares to receive cavalry, and countermarching by ranks, I acknowledge have been neglected, the former being of no use in this country, and the latter adapted only to battalion movements, and we have not a sufficient number of city corps to form one. We have not been able to practice light infantry drill this year, for the simple reason that we have lost the only ground we occupied last, and as yet have been unable to procure any other which would allow of a company being moved in extended order. I cordially agree with Major Gordon that the men are apt and eager to learn; but however apt and eager they may be to acquire knowledge, until men can spare more time for drill than in these busy days they can afford to do, perfection in drill, as expected by Major Gordon, is hardly to be attained.

With respect to the remarks on the staff drill-sergeant, it is needless for me to revert to them—he being suspended for writing a letter in the papers—beyond stating that he has worked hard since I have known him, is a past instructor of Hythe, and his having lived two miles out of town has been of no inconvenience to the town corps, and of the greatest convenience to several of the country corps.

I do certainly require a sergeant now, to replace the one suspended, for the instruction of recruits; but beyond that, I can undertake, by the end of the drill season, to bring my men to quite as high a state of drill as the limited time they can afford to give to it would enable any one to accomplish.

I have, &c.,

The Acting Under Secretary for Defence,
Militia and Volunteer Branch.

H. E. READER, Lieutenant-Colonel,
Commanding Wellington District.

No. 3.

EXTRACT from the *Evening Post*, relative to the NAPIER ARTILLERY and MAJOR GORDON'S conduct towards them.

THE *Napier Telegraph* of the 8th instant contains the following:—A numerous meeting of the Napier Artillery Company was held last night at the Foresters' Arms, Captain Routledge in the chair. It was unanimously resolved that the company should not disband, but being now the only Volunteers in the Province, that they would do their utmost to make the corps one of the best in New Zealand, and worthy of being inspected by any one, in spite of the disapprobation, animadversions, and strictures of Major Gordon, which, in the opinion of the meeting, were totally inapplicable, uncalled for, and inadmissible. Major Gordon's conduct was severely commented on as unworthy of an officer and a gentleman, and the company took that opportunity of recording, on the books of the corps, their opinion of it. It was resolved that the Cadet Company of the Rifle corps should be taken over, as, unless they were attached to an adult company, they would have to be disbanded.

No. 4.

Letter from Major WITHERS, Napier, to the UNDER SECRETARY for DEFENCE, Wellington.

SIR,—

Militia and Volunteer Office, Napier, 27th April, 1874.

I have the honor to inform you that, agreeable to your instructions, I called on Captain Routledge to report, for your information, what foundation there was for the language said to have been made use of in a resolution which was proposed, carried, and ordered to be recorded on the books of the corps under his command, at a meeting held by them, as reported in the *Napier Telegraph* of the 8th instant, and copied into the *Evening Post* of the 13th instant, and now append his reply, together with an attested copy of the resolution in question.

I have, &c.,

E. WITHERS, Major,
Commanding Napier Militia and Volunteer District.

Colonel Wm. Moule, Under Secretary for Defence,
Militia and Volunteer Branch, Wellington.

Enclosure 1 in No. 4.

Letter from Captain ROUTLEDGE, N.A.V., to Major WITHERS.

SIR,—

Napier, 25th April, 1874.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of yours dated 20th of April, asking for a report of certain language said to have been used at a meeting of the N.A.V., at which meeting I was chairman.