

1875.

NEW ZEALAND.

## INSPECTION OF THE VOLUNTEER FORCES,

(CORRESPONDENCE IN CONNECTION WITH MAJOR GORDON'S REPORT OF).

*Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.*

## No. 1.

Major LUDLAM to the Hon. the DEFENCE MINISTER.

SIR,—

Militia Office, Hutt, 2nd September, 1874.

I have the honor to bring under your notice a portion of the report of the Inspector of Volunteers (Major Gordon) laid before Parliament during its last session, which casts a grave reflection on my conduct as the Officer Commanding the Volunteers in this portion of the Wellington District. In his report he says,—“That the Hutt is a promising corps, but was unacquainted with what the Regulations imperatively required that Volunteers should know—viz., a knowledge of squad or company drill. On inquiry why this corps had not been instructed on these points, Major Ludlam intimated that he only permitted it to be practised in such movements as he considered would be useful on actual service. How Major Ludlam or any other officer certified under their hands that the men of this Company were efficient Volunteers, and possessed a knowledge of squad and company drill, and thereby obtained capitulation for them, I cannot understand. This corps performed one or two movements in light drill with tolerable precision, but I do not think that the experience of Major Ludlam or any other officer with respect to what manœuvres would be useful on service should be allowed to supersede what is expressly laid down as the course of drill in the Volunteer Regulations, and then to certify in writing that Volunteers know what they do not know.”

It appears to me that this statement involves a serious charge of neglect of my duty, and of practising a deception on the Government in signing certificates of efficiency whereby the Volunteers have received capitulation money improperly. Major Gordon has selected me from amongst the officers in this district against whom he makes the charge. I therefore feel it incumbent on me to ask that you will be good enough to cause an inquiry to be made into the matter by the appointment of a Board, or such other mode as you may consider best.

I feel that the charge of having granted certificates of efficiency knowing them to be false, with a view of enabling Volunteers to obtain capitulation money, is so serious that you will agree with me that an inquiry is necessary.

I have, &amp;c.,

A. LUDLAM,

Major.

The Hon. the Defence Minister, Wellington.

## No. 2.

Lieut.-Colonel MOULE to Major GORDON.

(No. 376.)

Native and Defence Office (Militia and Volunteer Branch),  
Wellington, 4th September, 1874.

SIR,—

Under instructions from the Hon. the Native Minister, I have the honor to transmit herewith copy of a letter received from Major Ludlam respecting the remarks contained in your report on the inspection of the Volunteers in the Hutt portion of the Wellington District; and to request you will favour me with your remarks thereon as soon as possible.

I have, &amp;c.,

W. MOULE, Lieut.-Colonel,

Acting Under Secretary Defence.

Major Gordon, &amp;c., &amp;c., Auckland.

## No. 3.

Major GORDON to the UNDER SECRETARY for DEFENCE.

SIR,—

Auckland, 12th September, 1874.

I have the honor to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 4th instant, covering a communication from Major Ludlam, commanding the Hutt Subdistrict, dated the 2nd instant, in which is embraced an extract from my recent report, to which he has taken exception, and desires that the matter with reference to his command which I brought under the notice of the Government should be investigated by a Board, or by some other tribunal.

In reply, I beg to be allowed to state that I have no objection whatever to the statements which I made in my report with respect to Volunteer matters in the Hutt Subdistrict being investigated by any Board or Court of Inquiry, as is requested by Major Ludlam; but I think I may reasonably object that any such issue should be submitted for investigation by such Court as that which is contained in the last few lines of his letter—namely, “his having granted certificates of efficiency, knowing them to be false, with a view of enabling Volunteers to obtain capitation money”—as I am not the author of such a statement.

I have, &c.,

WM. GORDON, Major,  
Inspector of Volunteers.

The Under Secretary for Defence,  
(Militia and Volunteer Branch,) Wellington.

#### No. 4.

Lieut.-Colonel MOULE to Major LUDLAM.

Native and Defence Office (Militia and Volunteer Branch),  
Wellington, 22nd September, 1874.

SIR,—

The Hon. the Native Minister has instructed me to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 2nd instant, complaining of that portion of Major Gordon's report which relates to the Hutt Volunteers, and desires me to say that he much regrets any difference of opinion should have arisen between that officer and yourself in regard to the nature of the instruction to be imparted to the Volunteers to enable them to earn certificates of efficiency; that, while admitting the wording of the paragraph in question might perhaps bear the construction you have put upon it, he cannot think that Major Gordon intended his remarks to be so implied; and that he believes the ordering of a Board of Inquiry, as you desire, would not lead to any satisfactory results.

Sir Donald McLean has further directed me to say that he trusts you are so well aware of the entire confidence the Government have for many years reposed in you in connection with your duties in the Militia and Volunteer Forces, that you do not need any further assurance from him of the satisfaction he entertains of your zealous and earnest endeavours to promote the success and efficiency of the Volunteers, and to carry out the Regulations in their integrity.

I have, &c.,

W. MOULE, Lieut.-Colonel,  
Acting Under Secretary Defence.

Major Ludlam, Hutt.

#### No. 5.

Major LUDLAM to the UNDER SECRETARY, Defence.

Militia Office, Hutt, 26th September, 1874.

SIR,—

I have the honor to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 22nd instant, in reply to mine of the 2nd, stating that you are instructed by the Hon. the Native Minister to say that he regrets any difference of opinion should have arisen between Major Gordon and myself in regard to the nature of the instruction to be imparted to Volunteers to enable them to earn certificates of efficiency; and, while admitting the wording of the paragraph in question might perhaps bear the construction I put upon it, he believes that the ordering of a Board of Inquiry would not lead to any satisfactory result.

In reply, I beg to say that I regret the matter is not to be inquired into, particularly as that portion of Major Gordon's report has been brought prominently before the public by its repeated publication in the local newspapers.

The assurance from Sir Donald McLean conveyed in your letter, that the Government are satisfied with the manner in which I have administered the Volunteer Regulations, is satisfactory, as it removes any reproach on my conduct as Officer Commanding the Militia and Volunteers in this portion of the Wellington District.

I have to request permission from the Hon. the Defence Minister to forward a copy of the correspondence to a local newspaper for publication.

I have, &c.,

A. LUDLAM,  
Major.

Lieut.-Colonel Moule, Wellington.

#### No. 6.

Lieut.-Colonel MOULE to Major LUDLAM.

Native and Defence Office (Militia and Volunteer Branch),  
Wellington, 5th October, 1874.

SIR,—

I have the honor to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 26th ultimo, in which you ask for permission to publish in a local newspaper the correspondence which has taken place respecting this part of Major Gordon's report relating to the Hutt portion of the Wellington District.

I have submitted your application to the Hon. the Native Minister, who has instructed me to say that such a course would be so unusual and subversive of discipline that he regrets he cannot comply with your request.

At the same time, if you require it, the Native Minister will not object to a Court of Inquiry.

I have, &c.,

W. MOULE, Lieut.-Colonel,  
Acting Under Secretary Defence.

Major Ludlam, Hutt.

## No. 7.

Major LUDLAM to the UNDER SECRETARY for DEFENCE.

SIR,—

Militia Office, Hutt, 10th October, 1874.

I have the honor to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 5th instant, informing me that you had submitted to the Hon. the Native Minister my letter of the 26th ultimo, and that he had instructed you to say, in reply, that such a course as I propose would be so unusual and subversive of discipline that he regrets he cannot comply with my request.

In reply, I desire to say that I should not have made what may appear to be an unusual request in asking for permission to publish the correspondence, but for the publicity given in the newspapers to that portion of Major Gordon's report relating to the Hutt portion of the Wellington District.

I trust the Hon. the Native Minister will do me the justice to lay the correspondence before Parliament at its next session, and obtain its sanction for it to be printed.

Lieut.-Colonel Moule,  
Acting Under Secretary for Defence, Wellington.

I have, &c.,  
A. LUDLAM,  
Major.

## No. 8.

Major GORDON to the UNDER SECRETARY for DEFENCE.

SIR,—

Auckland, 12th October, 1874.

Having been provided with a printed copy of my report on the Volunteer Force of the colony. I find that it is not in that complete state in which I wished it to be placed on record. A letter on the subject of irregularities in Thames District is omitted, and so also is Major Cooper's letter of explanation.

Other documents are added and bound up with the report, which until now I had not been permitted to see. I allude more particularly to the letter of Lieut.-Colonel Reader, of the 24th December, which, if it had been handed to me for report, would have been returned to you with a very earnest request that it should be withdrawn, or at all events re-written.

Colonel Reader has taken exception to the movements I required to be executed by his men, and I am glad to be able to afford sound reasons for my proceedings in this respect, which show how untenable are the arguments and opinions of Colonel Reader, and how much the publication of his letter is to be regretted.

In 1871, that officer compiled the Drill-book, entitled "Manual of Squad and Company Drill, for use of Volunteers," in which you will find the movements named by him (and which are the simplest in the work in question) fully explained for practice by a single company.

On the 21st August, 1871, the Government, by circular letter, adopted this code of drill, and enjoined a strict adherence thereto; and ever since that date, year by year, Colonel Reader has obtained capitulation from the Government for his men, by certifying that they had a competent knowledge (that is in effect what he did when he signed the annual capitulation returns) of the movements he now, in his letter of 24th December, informs you that they do not possess. One of the most important parts of my duty as Inspector was to ascertain that the various corps of the colony had a competent knowledge of squad and company drill; and it was not unreasonable to ask those under Colonel Reader's command to execute any—and I chose the most simple—of the movements defined in the book of instructions compiled by himself, and which had been ordered by the Government to practise in circular letter of 21st August, 1871, and for their supposed knowledge of which he had obtained capitulation for them.

Colonel Reader is quite in error in supposing that certain movements to which he alludes cannot be practised excepting in battalion, for his own compilation explains them as purely company movements; and he was ordered to practise them as such.

He is further in error in supposing that without the existence of a battalion he cannot carry out battalion drill. Such drill can be readily (and with one or two exceptions) completely executed with only two companies; and he has more than that number; indeed he has the elements for composing a strong and smart battalion for drill purposes.

Light-infantry drill he tells you he has not practised; but I consider that the ground on which his companies paraded was, though circumscribed, admirably adapted for, at all events, the rudiments of light drill.

Colonel Reader seems to have objected to his corps being inspected with their recruits in the ranks. Why then did he arm them and place them therein? It was clearly not my duty to go round such companies, and direct each man whom I might consider a recruit to fall out.

He tells you that in "doubling" with arms, his impression is that the elbows should not be bent, but he ought to be aware that in every instance of doubling the elbows are bent and hands raised excepting when arms are trailed.

He states that his drill sergeant was suspended "for writing a letter to the papers." I was in no way instrumental in placing this sergeant in arrest, but I have grounds for believing that he was suspended, to speak more accurately, for the sentiments he expressed in the letter which he wrote to the papers.

In his allusion to the Artillery Company, Colonel Reader adverts to my finding fault that certain company movements which were attempted by me were not familiar to the members of that corps, and that I further stated that the most important part of their duty was to learn ordinary company drill, gunnery drill being a secondary consideration. He has, no doubt, by this time been assured of the justice of my strictures and requirements, for I conclude he has had before him the form of efficiency certificate, which places in proper order the requisite attainments of Artillery Volunteers.

Colonel Reader's assertion that I expect perfection in drill from Volunteers is considerably beyond the region of fact. I only look for that amount of knowledge which the Government exacts before it will sanction the issue of capitation—the amount which is very simply and very concisely defined in the efficiency certificate, but which, however, is of a more advanced description than that which is attributed to the Volunteer companies of Wellington by their own commanding officer.

In consequence of Colonel Reader's high position in the Volunteer Force of the colony, I must assure you that the writing of this letter causes me no inconsiderable sorrow; and I equally regret that his letter of 24th December was not referred to me in some shape or other until after it had gone forth to the Volunteer community replete with fallacious notions of drill, and arguments which must prove most injurious to himself, to the force under his command, and to the force generally.

As it was withheld, however, from me, and probably from sound reason, of which I would be glad even now to be informed, I must ask, as an act of justice, that it be either withdrawn and cancelled, or that this counter-statement be placed on record in juxtaposition with it.

I have, &c.,

WM. GORDON, Major,  
Inspector of Volunteers.

The Under Secretary for Defence,  
(Militia and Volunteer Branch,) Wellington.

### No. 9.

Lieut.-Colonel MOULE to Major GORDON.

Native and Defence Office (Militia and Volunteer Branch),  
Wellington, 24th October, 1875.

(No. 459.)  
SIR,—

I am instructed by the Hon. the Native Minister to acknowledge receipt of your letter No. 439, of the 12th instant, relative to your printed report.

I have, &c.,

W. MOULE, Lieut.-Colonel,  
Acting Under Secretary Defence.

Major Gordon,  
Commanding Militia District, Auckland.