

NAPIER DISTRICT.

The first corps paraded was the Artillery (F Battery). I found it much changed since I had left the district (only six months), several of the old members having resigned, whose places had been filled by recruits who do not by any means add to the efficiency of the corps; nevertheless, I found them well clothed, arms, accoutrements, &c., clean and in good order. They acquitted themselves very fairly at squad, company, and gun drill.

The next corps paraded was the Engineers, a very fine body, and for the time they have been in training they drill very well. The captain complains he has not a sufficiency of rifles, only 60 stand for 77 men; but I presume this can easily be remedied by his making application for more. The cadets, the last corps inspected, have fallen off very much in point of numbers; but those I saw drilled passably well.

WELLINGTON DISTRICT.

In this district the first corps paraded was the Kaiwarawara Rifles. I minutely inspected their clothing, arms, and accoutrements; they were clean and in good order. I directed one of the sergeants to prove them as a company, and the lieutenant to put them through the manual and firing exercises. The captain then put them through marching drill, including the different formations—from a company in line to a company in column—front forming company from fours, from both flanks, counter-marching, &c., in some of which they were a little unsteady. This I consider is wholly attributable to the non-attendance of a few of the members at the weekly drills of the company.

The next corps seen were the City Rifles and Cadets, whose clothing, arms, and accoutrements were clean and in good order. They performed the manual and firing exercise, forming fours, &c., pretty well; but in the limited space in which they paraded (the engine-house of the Fire Brigade) it was impossible thoroughly to judge of their efficiency.

The next companies I inspected were the Artillery (D battery), with the Artillery Cadets. These, like the last-mentioned, were seen to very great disadvantage from want of space, having paraded in the same building. I found them uniform in dress; arms and accoutrements clean and in good order. They were subjected to the same drill as the last-named companies, which they performed to my satisfaction.

I would here bring to notice the great disadvantage the Wellington companies labour under from the want of a proper drill-shed, as it is impossible to manœuvre them in the building in which they now assemble.

I did not inspect the Makara Company through want of time, intending to see them on my return from the Southern districts; but was then instructed to proceed to Wanganui at once, to inspect the Volunteers there.

CHRISTCHURCH DISTRICT.

In this district there are nine corps—the Yeomanry Cavalry, the Christchurch and Timaru Batteries of Artillery, four companies of Rifles, and the High School and Timaru Artillery Cadets—the majority of whom have a fair knowledge of drill in its various branches. Their clothing, arms, and accoutrements were clean and in good order. I must make exception, in all these respects, in the case of No. 5, or the Kaiapoi Corps, in which neither the officer, Lieutenant Perrin, nor his men seemed to have any knowledge of drill; many of them were not in uniform, attendance at parades very irregular, and the company is twelve below the minimum strength, as shown by their state. Taking all things into consideration, I think it desirable they should be disbanded.

With regard to the Cavalry, I was informed that it would be impossible to get a good muster, as they were so scattered. I was therefore requested to postpone my inspection till after I had visited places further South, as they would then be assembled for six days' consecutive training, on which occasion I should be likely to see the whole corps. For some reason the training did not come off at the time appointed, consequently I had no opportunity of seeing them; but from what I could ascertain they are a fine body of men, and well-mounted.

OAMARU DISTRICT.

The number of corps in this district is six: one of artillery, three of rifles, and two of cadets. Their clothing, arms, and accoutrements were clean and in good order, and they drill very fairly, with the exception of the Hampden Company, the officers of which did not understand their work, causing the men to drill badly; but when taken in hand by Major Stewart, the officer commanding the district, they did much better in this respect.

DUNEDIN DISTRICT.

In this district there are 27 corps, including the Head-quarters and City Guard Bands and the Cadets, the whole of which I inspected, except the West Taieri, which I was prevented seeing as there was no communication with the place, the bridge having been carried away by the floods. In many cases the attendance was very small compared with the numbers on the roll, excepting the B battery of Artillery and most of the cadet corps. The majority of the latter belong to the different schools in the city, and were marched direct from the school to the parade ground. This would account for their large attendance.

The appearance of the different adult corps was very good, and they, with one exception, drilled well; but those of which I must make special mention are: the B Battery of Artillery, who paraded 78 of all ranks; the City Guards; the North Dunedin Rifles; Waikari Rifles, Nos. 1 and 2 Companies; Bruce Rifles; East Taieri Rifles; and the Dunedin and Port Chalmers Naval Brigades.

The corps I have alluded to above is the Portobello Rifles, which did not drill well, neither did their officers understand their work.

The cadet corps which merited the greatest commendation are the High School Artillery (an exceptionally fine corps), the City Guards, the Normal School, Middle District School, High School Rifles, and the Dunedin and Port Chalmers Naval Cadets.

The corps I have omitted in the foregoing list were greatly deficient in steadiness, except the Sandymount, who are not armed: they performed preliminary and marching drill very well.