

INVERCARGILL DISTRICT.

I inspected the Garrison Band on the night of my arrival, 29 members on parade. Their uniform is neat and effective. They played exceedingly well, and I consider them about the best Volunteer band in New Zealand, and a credit to their conductor.

There are five corps in this district, not including the Riverton Cadets.

The adult corps comprise the G and K Batteries of Artillery, and the Invercargill and Riverton Rifle Corps.

The G Battery, considering the short time they have been embodied, drill well, and at the time of my inspection had only been in possession of carbines about a fortnight.

The K Battery gave me great satisfaction as regards their uniform, the condition of their arms, and the manner in which they drilled.

The Invercargill Rifles presented a very military appearance; they drilled well. Their clothing, arms, and accoutrements were all in excellent order.

The Riverton Rifles were very deficient in their knowledge of drill. It appears that they have been very much neglected by their captain, who, I am informed, is about to resign; in which case they have a prospect of securing the services of an efficient officer.

The cadet corps are two in number—the Artillery and the Riverton.

The Artillery paraded without carbines, the reason assigned for which was that they had been taken into store to enable the officer commanding the district to see them previous to his signing the capitulation roll. Their uniform was clean, and they performed preliminary and marching drill very fairly.

The Riverton Cadets paraded only 10 in number, without officers or non-commissioned officers arms, accoutrements, or uniform, and knew little or nothing of drill. I would therefore recommend, their services be discontinued.

QUEENSTOWN.

In this district there are in all five corps: three adult and two cadet. The adult corps are the Queenstown, Arrow, and Cromwell Rifles, all the members of which, with the exception of 10 recruits (six in the Cromwell, and 4 in the Arrow), were in uniform. Arms and accoutrements clean and in good order, and their knowledge of drill quite as good as the average.

The Arrow Cadets are without arms. Captain Aldred informed me he had applied for them, and had been promised that when a supply arrived from England he should get what he required. They were put through the different movements in marching drill, turnings, &c., which they performed very steadily.

The Queenstown Cadets presented a most wretched appearance. Some few of them paraded in worn-out red coats and forage caps, the remainder in their ordinary dress; and on inquiring how it was I was informed it was owing to some bad management on the part of their late captain. Their present commanding officer assured me he was only waiting the receipt of the capitulation allowance for 1878-79 when he would procure new uniforms for them. This corps also paraded without carbines, having lent them to the Arrow corps to enable them to fire for the Government prizes. They were put through preliminary and marching drill, in which they were by no means proficient, and were very unsteady.

WANGANUI DISTRICT.

There are in this district two corps of cavalry, three of infantry, and one of cadets. At the time appointed for my inspection of the Wanganui Cavalry I found only one officer (Lieutenant Somerville) and four troopers on the ground. This was owing to the unavoidably short notice given, the members of the corps almost without exception residing many miles from the parade ground. The same cause prevented me from seeing the other troop, and I was led to understand it would take at least a week's notice to insure a large attendance; but upon inquiry Major Noake, the officer in command of the district, informed me that both corps were in an efficient state.

I inspected the Wanganui Rifles. They were all in uniform; arms and accoutrements very clean. They were proved by one of the sergeants, put through the manual and firing exercise by the lieutenant, and the captain then put them through the bayonet exercise and marching drill; the whole of which was performed with precision.

I next inspected the Palmerston Rifles, a corps whose services have only been accepted some four months. As might be expected, they are not yet supplied with uniform. Their arms, accoutrements, &c., were clean. The Drill Instructor put them through the manual and firing exercise, also preliminary drill by numbers, and marching drill, which they performed very fairly. This promises to be a fine company.

The next corps seen was the Marton Rifles, and I regret to say they have very little idea of the simplest rudiments of company drill, which is accounted for by the fact that the majority of them are mere recruits.

I inspected the Wanganui Cadets. This corps has two kinds of carbines—the Terry and the muzzle-loader—which is very detrimental to their efficiency. Their arms, &c., were clean, but not in serviceable order. They were very unsteady at drill.

GISBORNE.

I inspected the Gisborne Rifles, and found everything clean and in good order. They were put through the usual drill, which they performed very unsteadily. This I have no doubt is attributable to the fact that they have never had the advantage of a Sergeant Drill Instructor. Since my return to Auckland the officer commanding the district has informed me by letter that there is a sergeant of the Armed Constabulary, a man in every way competent, who would undertake this duty for a small addition to his present pay—2s. per diem; and I would recommend that his services should be secured.