

annum per man is insufficient to keep a field battery efficient. The wear and tear on uniform in cleaning and pulling about the guns is great, while the expenditure on oil, cotton-waste, flannel, &c., for cleaning the guns has to be provided out of capitation. As a rule the field batteries keep up their numbers better than the infantry corps.

*Naval Artillery and Garrison Batteries.*—There is a marked improvement in many of these corps, and the attention given by the batteries to big-gun drill, torpedo-work, submarine-mining, and signalling drills is praiseworthy, and the reports received from the various Instructors in these different drills is most encouraging. During last year 72 were passed as efficient in submarine-mining, and 48 in heavy-gun drill, receiving the extra £1 and badge of efficiency; and it is presumed this year that number will be considerably increased, as many more are now under instruction. Since the guns have been mounted at the drill-sheds in the four centres the attendance has considerably improved, and every facility has been given for teaching the technical part of gunnery, by lectures on the projectiles and explosives in use with this particular description of ordnance, which have been well attended and appreciated by the Volunteers.

*Engineers.*—There are three companies of engineers—at Auckland, Christchurch, and Dunedin respectively, but none in Wellington. Each corps has extensive appliances and tools, which are almost entirely supplied and kept up by the corps themselves. They are an extremely useful body of men comprising all sort of trades, and have more than once when in camp proved their efficiency by erecting and maintaining a telephone connection with the Government telegraph system. They are also well trained in signalling by flags in daylight, and with lamps at night.

*Infantry.*—As already pointed out, the rifle corps have fallen off numerically during the past year, though I am glad to say not in efficiency, while they continue to maintain their reputation for good shooting. Their physique is perhaps not quite so good as formerly in the town corps, but as stated last year they are all that can be desired for citizen soldiers; and if employers of labour would only give a little encouragement to the Volunteer movement, by occasionally giving an hour or two's leave to attend parades, the existing vacancies in corps would very soon be filled up. The opposition shown by employers of labour in refusing their men the smallest amount of time necessary for the performance of any military duty is somewhat inexplicable, when it is remembered that these employers would be the greatest sufferers were an attack made on these shores, and it is mainly for the protection of their properties that the Force is maintained. It is a matter of surprise to many how well the men turn out at night for drill, after having undergone a hard day's work. This clearly shows that the men are as a rule anxious to make themselves efficient.

*Cadets.*—The strength of this portion of the Force at the end of the past year was 2,112, being a decrease of 232 on the previous year. Many of these corps are valuable feeders to the Volunteer Force, and if possible more encouragement should be given to corps belonging to schools, and cadet camps should be held at some convenient season under responsible officers. The presence of these boys at Easter adult camps is, I am forced to think, not attended with any beneficial results. They require tent-accommodation, which can ill be spared, and the staff drill-instructors' time is too much taken up with camp duties to enable them to give any attention to the cadets. These boys are not available for guard or picquet duties, and as they could be encamped by themselves some time during the summer without inconvenience, some such arrangement would probably be attended with more useful results than is the outcome of the present system of their attending Easter camps.

*Medical Officers.*—It is a general complaint amongst the medical department that no encouragement is given them to train an ambulance corps, and that their position and status are not sufficiently recognized; that many constantly attend parades, while others perform no duties at all. It appears there are fair grounds for complaint, and new rules for medical officers' guidance are much required.

*Equipment, Dress, &c.*—It is a pleasure to find that a new karkee uniform has been sanctioned, and will probably be shortly adopted throughout the Force. It has been chosen for service rather than display, and is of colonial traditional aspect. It will serve for both full and undress by the difference of the headdress, the glengarry being worn as undress, and the soft-felt hat as full-dress. If this uniform were universally adopted by the mounted rifles, artillery, engineers, and infantry, and the capitation guaranteed for three years, all corps should very soon be financially sound. The keeping-up full and undress uniforms is unnecessary, and hampers corps funds considerably. New belts are much required throughout the Force, but it will probably be wise to defer purchasing these till a decision has been come to as to what magazine-rifle the Government intend adopting. A marked improvement in the equipment of mounted corps is the adoption of a uniform-pattern bridle, bit, and saddle-cloth, but buckets for carrying rifles and bandoleers are much required for these troops. The all-important question of new rifles seems as far off solution as ever, but the determination to wait for the lead of the Imperial service in this respect is both wise and economical, and, if another twelve months can be tided over with the sniders now in use, our patience should be rewarded by obtaining the best-pattern magazine-rifle procurable. The whole question of the merit of the different rifles now under trial at Home seems to depend on the magazine attached to them, which is indeed their *raison d'être*: the improvement sought for is not a trifling acceleration of fire above that of the single-loader for ordinary occasions, but a certain reliable store of strength with which to meet the extraordinary occasions which in modern wars are certain to arise. The want of harness is very much felt in the field batteries, and Maxim guns are required for each centre.

*Easter Camps.*—Three camps were held last Easter: at Redcastle (Oamaru), Palmerston North, and Greymouth respectively; the total attendance being 1,806, 1,211, and 353; and the cost £1,719 7s. 5d., as shown by return attached, Table III. While admitting that good service was done at these camps, it appears worthy of consideration whether the Government gets a sufficient return for this large expenditure. Many of the corps, from the distance they have to