

and prison service, having been well grounded in discipline and subordination from the time of their enrolment in the militia.

*Conduct.*—The conduct of the Permanent Militia has been, on the whole, good, though I regret to have to report that one gunner was convicted of embezzlement.

*Instructors.*—The Master-gunner and two assistants (instructors) belonging to the Royal Artillery continue to give satisfaction to all ranks, while the non-commissioned officers of the Force generally are well spoken of, and eulogised as instructors, by the Volunteers and others who receive instruction at their hands.

*Torpedo Corps and Submarine Miners.*—The officers, petty officers, non-commissioned officers, and men of the corps have been practised in their duties as torpedomen and submarine miners periodically. The whole of the Government launches and torpedo-boats at the four centres are now in charge of, and are worked by, members of the corps. A class of men are now preparing for examination to obtain certificates in engine-driving. Eight men have already passed since this course of instruction was first initiated, and these men are now in charge of the various engines, boilers, and machinery at the different submarine mining stations.

*Practical Work.*—The following practical work has been carried out by members of the corps during the past year: The wreck of the wooden barque "Willie McLaren," 870 tons, with 1,000 tons of coal, which was an obstacle to the navigation of Wellington Harbour, was successfully blown up by an explosion of gun-cotton charges. The wreck of the iron sailing-ship, "Lyttelton," 2,000 tons, which impeded the navigation at Timaru, was also successfully demolished by the same means. Rocks which have always been an obstacle in the way of navigation at Nelson Harbour were removed by successive charges of gun-cotton, and as a proof of the success of these operations it may be mentioned that the sailing-ship "Pleione," on her last visit to Nelson, which was after the removal of the rocks, though drawing more water than on her previous visit, was enabled to be berthed at the wharf immediately upon her arrival from England, whereas on her previous voyage she had to lay outside some four weeks and discharge 300 tons of cargo before being taken inside the harbour. There are still some more rocks at Nelson that require to be removed, and the work will probably be undertaken during the summer.

*Mine-fields.*—Considerable progress with the surveys of the mine-fields at Wellington and Auckland has been made, and both these fields will shortly be completed.

*Casualties.*—The following casualties occurred in the Permanent Militia during the year: Deaths, 2; resignations, 11; discharges, 10.

*Recruits.*—31 recruits have joined. They are of the usual stamp, robust, active, intelligent, and subordinate, and their conduct and progress in their duties is all that can be desired. The system of recruiting from men who have at least one year's efficient service in the Volunteers is answering well, and there is no abatement in the number of applicants. It has not been found practicable yet to give those men transferred to the Police and Prisons Departments an annual course of a fortnight's gun-drill, but the necessity for this is still manifest, and it is to be hoped will ultimately be brought into operation.

*Volunteers.*—On the 31st December last, the active strength of the Volunteer Force of the colony was 6,582 of all ranks, as against 6,700 at the close of the previous year, and of these numbers 5,376 earned capitulation last year, as against 4,939 the year before. This will no doubt be somewhat surprising to those sceptics who continually assert that the Volunteer movement is dying out, that the men are disheartened and disgusted with their treatment, and receive no encouragement; but these fallacies are completely upset by the substantial increase of 437 efficient for the past year. No reliance can be put on the actual strength shown on paper, as many of the men whose names are retained on the rolls are absent from the colony, but as regards the number of those who have earned capitulation there can be no miscalculation.

*Cavalry and Mounted Rifles.*—There are 6 cavalry corps (North Island 4, South Island 2), with a total of 359 sabres; while of mounted rifles there are 9 corps (North Island 6, South Island 3), with a total of 478. All these corps are drilled both as cavalry and infantry; they are all well mounted and good horsemen.

*Naval Artillery.*—There are 17 batteries (North Island 7, South Island 10), with a total of 1,155 of all ranks. These corps are visibly improving year by year, and there can be no reason for doubting that they would be most valuable auxiliaries to the Permanent Artillery and Torpedo Corps in time of need. Under instructors from the Permanent Militia, the majority of these corps have made considerable progress in big-gun drill, torpedo- and submarine-work, boat-drill, signalling, knotting and splicing, and the reports received from the instructors in these different drills is very encouraging, and reflects credit on the officers, non-commissioned officers, and men concerned. During last year 107 were passed as efficient in submarine mining, as against 72 in the previous year, and the same number passed in heavy-gun drill, as against 48 in the previous year. We therefore have 214 from these naval artillery corps receiving the extra £1 and efficiency badge—half the number for gun-drill, and half for torpedo- and submarine-work.

*Artillery (Field and Garrison).*—There are 12 batteries (North Island 4, South Island 8), with a total of 633 of all ranks. The guns in use with the field batteries are now obsolete, and should be replaced as soon as possible. The mounting of 64-pounders at the drillsheds for the use of the garrison batteries has been much appreciated, and has added considerably to the efficiency of the corps.

*Engineers.*—There are 3 companies of engineers (North Island 1, South Island 2). Each corps has purchased, and maintains, extensive appliances and tools, and they have made considerable progress during the year in engineer-work, under instructors from the Royal Engineers, and the Torpedo Corps Inspector reports favourably on all these three corps.

*Rifles.*—There are 65 rifle corps (North Island 21, South Island 44), with a total strength of 3,751. These corps, while steadily improving in drill, maintain their reputation for good shooting; but in many of the town corps the commanding officers, owing to over-anxiety to increase their