

It has been found that, in order to secure the above object, it will be necessary to amend the present Defence Act of 1886, and the Conference strongly urges that an Amendment Bill may be passed this session.

The constitution of the Conference—

Four members of the Legislative Council ;

Ten members of the House of Representatives, all of whom are now, or have been, in the Volunteer Force ; and

Seven members of the Permanent Staff ; with

One, the Acting Under-Secretary of Defence

—has insured that all questions dealt with by the Conference have been considered fully as regards their effect or policy, and as regards the direct interests of the Volunteers, while efficiency has been well safeguarded.

That the Conference has been imbued with the hope and belief that their recommendations may be of service to the Government, and to yourself, and may be given effect to, has been evidenced by the practically constant attendance of members.

The excellent work done by the secretary, Mr. Stratton Royle, is brought to your notice in a separate memorandum, which, the Conference hopes, may be favourably considered by you.

I have, &c.,

G. S. WHITMORE, Major-General,
Chairman Volunteer Conference.

The Hon. the Premier and Defence Minister, Wellington.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CONFERENCE ON VOLUNTEER MATTERS.

1. That, considering the necessity of having in time of war a secure harbour for commerce in each island, the harbours of Wellington and Lyttelton should be strengthened.
2. That, taking into consideration the importance of the cable to the colony, this Conference is of opinion that the Government should take steps to protect the cable-station.
3. That it is of the utmost importance that the complete rearming of the New Zealand Forces with the Martini-Henry rifle, which, after full discussion, they believe to be the most suitable arm for the purposes of defence, should be proceeded with at once.
4. That the Permanent Force should first be armed with the Martini-Henry rifle from the five hundred on hand, and the residue be awarded at the four centres and Nelson, to such single Volunteer rifle-corps as may be selected by the officer commanding the district.
5. That there should be at all times, at the five district centres recommended in Colonel Fox's report, a total reserve of small-arms service ammunition of not less than one million rounds, so distributed as to provide that there should not be less than one hundred rounds per man of the nominal strength of the district at each centre.
6. That to provide against the contingency of a failure in the supply of ammunition from England, which, in the opinion of the Conference, is possible in case of any declaration of war, it is highly desirable that a contract for a period of years should be arranged with the Colonial Ammunition Company to supply all the small-arms ammunition, and such other ammunition as they manufacture, the evidence before the Conference proving that the ammunition manufactured by the company is of first-rate quality.
7. That all batteries of field artillery kept up by the Government should be properly armed and equipped.
8. That it is absolutely essential to the proper efficiency of the New Zealand Forces that there should be an officer to be the Commander of the Forces responsible for the discipline and efficiency of the Force as provided in "The Defence Act, 1886," with properly-defined duties, functions, and powers.
9. That clauses 11 and 42 and Part VI., as well as the interpretation clause of "The Defence Act, 1886," should be amended in the direction indicated in the appended document (A), and new clauses be inserted giving officers commanding districts and inspecting officer power to fine under the Act, and also empowering the Minister to make contracts for munitions of war, and appointments to the defence forces, for a period of years.
10. That the volunteer regulations as amended should be adopted.
11. That the uniform of the volunteer corps in the colony should be as laid down in the amended dress regulations. (Memorandum K.)
12. That the musketry regulations as amended should be adopted.
13. That the militia and volunteer districts be redefined.