

and Captain Brandon and the members of the College Rifles, Wellington, kindly handed over to us all their khaki coats which had been completed for their corps.

The Union Steamship Company, by placing at our disposal their foreman, Mr. Daniel, and his trained staff, have enabled us to complete and fit the s.s. "Waiwera" so that she will be able to sail on the date originally fixed on. Without this assistance there would have assuredly been delay in the date of the despatch of the Contingent.

For my own part, I must thank everybody most cordially for the aid they have so cheerfully rendered.

A. P. PENTON, Colonel,
Commander New Zealand Forces.

LETTER FROM THE UNDER-SECRETARY FOR DEFENCE.

SIR,—

Defence Office, Wellington, 23rd October, 1899.

Now that the contingent of mounted infantry has left the shores of this colony for South Africa, and that the preparations for their despatch, which have continued for the past ten days, have had their efficacy proved by the fact that everything ordered was placed on board by noon on the 21st instant, I desire, as head of the Defence Department, to bring to your notice the unceasing and untiring energy of the officers of the department who have so ably assisted me in a work which, I believe, has been carried out with a rapidity and completeness which does credit to the colony which we have the honour to serve.

The duties placed upon this department of completely equipping a force of 210 officers and men and 250 horses have happily been carried out to the minutest detail without one single hitch.

I have to thank the officers of the Stores Department for their unwearied exertions, both by day and night, to execute every order I have given to them, and to carry out the onerous duties which have been placed on them, and which have contributed so much to what I think I may with confidence say has resulted in so complete a success.

I have also to thank the clerical officers of the department for their devotion to their duty at a time of great stress, and for the manner in which they have at all times done so much to assist in the important work which has now been completed. I desire also to acknowledge the cordial co-operation and assistance rendered by the Commander of the Forces and the military staff.

I feel that I should be wanting in my duty did I not bring to your notice the fact that every article of equipment has been received in the Stores Department and forwarded to the camp, so that every officer and man thereat might be completely equipped prior to embarkation.

The duties of storekeeper at the camp were most ably carried out by Corporal Butler, of the Permanent Artillery, who had under him as assistants two gunners of that Force, and every single article of equipment was issued by them complete to the troops.

In order that you may see what has been done, I beg to attach for your information a list of the equipment issued.

You have already ascertained by personal inspection the efficient manner in which the horse and other fittings of the "Waiwera" have been completed by Mr. Daniel, of the Union Steamship Company, but I cannot refrain from expressing the great obligation the department is under to that gentleman for his marvellous performance in preparing the ship for the reception of troops and horses in so short a time. The work executed by Mr. Daniel will for ever remain in my memory as the most extraordinary exhibition of what can be done by skill and forethought.

It will be remembered that fourteen days since nothing had been done towards the preparations necessary for the Contingent that on Saturday left our shores; but, instructions having been given by you in that the "Waiwera" was to sail on the 21st, I assured you that she should find us ready, and the result is now known to the world.

I also desire to point out the great obligations under which the department lies to Mr. Ritchie, Secretary for Agriculture, Mr. Gilruth, and other officers of the Stock Department for the work done by them.

The thanks of the department are also due to Lieut.-Colonel Moore, of the South Canterbury Battalion, and those under his command, for placing all their stock of khaki at disposal of the Government for the use of the Contingent; to Captain Brandon, of the College Rifles, for having supplied the Government with the khaki uniforms of the corps; to Captain Loveday, Heretaunga Mounted Rifles, for supplying the department with the saddlery recently imported by his corps; and to several officers for having given up to the officers of the Contingent the regulation swords which were their own personal property. The patriotic spirit of all concerned was most gratifying.

The Union Steamship Company placed the services of Mr. Daniel (superintendent of repairs) unreservedly at the disposal of the Government to fit up the Transvaal steamer, and I have already mentioned the value of the work performed by him.

The Shaw, Savill, and Albion Company at once met the wishes of the Government by diverting the "Waiwera" from London to South Africa, and gave every facility and assistance in the task of fitting her up speedily as a troopship.

The consignors of goods for shipment to London by the "Waiwera" cheerfully consented to cancel their arrangements.

The contractors for the various supplies devoted the resources of their establishments to the speedy carrying-out of their contracts.

Many of our fellow-colonists, both European and Maori, presented horses for the use of the Contingent.