

1899.  
NEW ZEALAND.

# DEFENCE FORCES OF NEW ZEALAND

(REPORT ON THE), BY COLONEL A. P. PENTON, R.A., COMMANDER OF THE FORCES.

*Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.*

Colonel A. R. PENTON, Commanding New Zealand Forces, to the Hon. the DEFENCE MINISTER.

SIR,—

Defence Office, Wellington, 14th July, 1899.

I have the honour to forward for the information of His Excellency the Governor and the Commander-in-Chief of New Zealand, my annual report on the Defence Forces of the colony.

Since the date of forwarding my last annual report a crisis has been passed through, when it seemed that Great Britain was on the point of being involved in a war which would have directly affected all parts of the Empire. The spirit of patriotism which was displayed by the defence forces of this colony was worthy of all praise, and I can confidently assert that had their services been required every man in the Forces would have come forward cheerfully and willingly to do his duty to the Empire. Special attention has been paid in the past year to strengthening the defences of the four principal ports, and to completing their equipment and fighting organization, and I am pleased to be able to report that we are a good deal more advanced now in our power of defence than we were twelve months ago.

## PERMANENT FORCE.

No further steps have been taken to increase the number of officers for the Force. Two young officers are in England undergoing training with the Imperial Forces. Two cadets are undergoing training in the colony, one being attached to the Artillery and one to the Submarine-mining branch of the Permanent Force. Provision was made in last year's estimates for the employment of four military cadets, but the two extra cadets thus authorised have not been appointed; and it is a matter for regret that, although the funds have been provided, no further steps have yet been taken to make the appointments, which in course of time should remedy the existing serious deficiency of trained officers. It seems useless to ask for any increase to either branch of the Permanent Force, but I feel it my duty to point out that, although we are increasing our armaments and putting up extra electric searchlight and other installations, we are not increasing the *personnel* of the Force. At Lyttelton, where we have only six non-commissioned officers and men of No. 2 Service Company, they have to take charge of and work the Government launch when it is running, the torpedo-boat, and the whole paraphernalia of an electric searchlight installation. At all the other stations I am short-handed, and have no men I can spare to send to Lyttelton.

My proposals to have the men of both No. 1 and No. 2 Service Companies put on special gradings as regards their qualifications have been approved, and I have submitted to you the conditions on which I consider the change should be carried out. I hope this will have the effect in No. 1 Company of providing Artillery specialists who will keep themselves well up in their work, and in No. 2 Company of enabling us to obtain a supply of tradesmen, such as electricians, engine-drivers, &c., for which at present we have urgent need.

The name of "sapper" has been substituted for that of "gunner" in No. 2 Service Company.

The Government of New South Wales again this year invited the colony to send any officers or non-commissioned officers of No. 1 Company to Sydney to undergo a course of gunnery instruction, lasting for about three months. There is a school of gunnery at Sydney, under the command of an artillery officer from the Imperial service, who has under him a staff of instructors and appliances for giving more thorough and systematic instruction than can be given in this colony.

I understand that the other Australian colonies avail themselves of the offer of the New South Wales Government and send men to this gunnery school for artillery instruction. I recommended that the same course should be followed by this colony; but, unfortunately for the welfare of the Force, my recommendation was not approved, and the offer was declined. I was especially anxious that one officer at least of the Permanent Force should go through this course, as none of