

sum equal to one-half the interest on the first cost. In respect to all the forces, when on service outside the colony the Imperial Government should provide the horses (when in the colony the men to provide their own horses), the payment of capitation and the payment of the forces when in camp in the colony, or on service outside the colony within prescribed limits, to be adjusted between the Imperial authorities and the colonial Governments on a population or other equitable basis. The reserve forces should be open for service within territorial limits, to be agreed upon between the Imperial and the colonial Governments. The pay of the officers and men when on service outside the colonies should not be less than that which is being paid to the Fifth Contingent at present serving in South Africa.

Services of men reserved within territorial limits.

Estimating the strength of our Volunteer corps at 18,000 men, we may reasonably expect that 8,000 of their number will enrol in the Imperial reserve. This number, together with 2,000 men of the Maori race who would join the reserve, would bring the number up to 10,000 men. Putting the capitation on those efficient at £5 per capita, the annual cost would be £50,000, to which must be added the pay during the time the men are in camp—say about £50,000 more. Therefore there would be in this colony 10,000 men available, at an annual cost of £100,000. Taking it for granted that, in like proportion to population, the same number of men would enrol in the Australian Colonies and Tasmania, and estimating the population of Australia and Tasmania at 3,500,000, the proportion would be 43,750 men. Added to the 10,000 in this colony, this would produce a reserve force of 53,750 men, or, in round numbers, an Imperial reserve of 50,000 men, at an annual cost of £1,000,000.

Strength of reserve estimated at 10,000 men.

Cost per annum.

Australian reserve, 50,000; cost one million per annum.

The captious critic may look upon this scheme as chimerical, and I had some doubts myself when, on the 11th May last, in a memorandum to His Excellency the Governor, I first outlined the scheme; but since then Major-General French has expressed the conviction that a force could be formed on the lines indicated, and, seeing that the drilling and training in the camp of the Volunteers would count for that required by the reserve, there is little doubt that the number estimated by me would be reached.

Major-General French indorses scheme.

#### RIFLE-CLUBS.

In respect of the formation of rifle-clubs, a club should consist of not less than twenty or more than forty members; and in localities where Volunteer corps have been formed only ex-Volunteers who have had not less than three years' service should be enrolled.

Formation of rifle-clubs.

In localities where there are no Volunteer corps, rifle-clubs may enrol members who have not had Volunteer service.

Qualification of members of rifle-clubs. Parades and drills necessary.

Members of rifle-clubs should, where practicable, attend a prescribed numbers of drills and parades in the course of the year, the instruction being in respect to handling arms and firing-exercise. The Government to supply rifles and ammunition to enrolled members of rifle-clubs at cost price.

After one year's enrolment members of rifle-clubs shall be tested at target practice, and on being able to make the minimum number of marks at the prescribed ranges, and having attended the prescribed number of drills and parades, they shall be entitled to receive a certificate as being efficient.

Certificate of efficiency.

For the first year every enrolled member of a rifle-club shall receive a free grant of fifty rounds of ammunition, and thereafter to every efficient member of a rifle-club there shall be allowed a free grant of one hundred rounds of ammunition, to be used at matches or at practice.

Free ammunition for practice.

Members of rifle-clubs also to have concession in the shape of free railway-passes when attending rifle-shooting competitions.

Free railway-passes.

#### CADET CORPS.

As has been stated by me in reply to questions, cadet corps should be established. They should be under the control of the Education Boards and the Education Department. A light rifle, similar to that used in the Colony of Victoria, should be provided for the use of, say, twenty of the elder boys in each school. The total number of boys who are in the Sixth Standard, or have passed it, is, say, 7,500, and the cost of giving one-fourth of them rifles would be £3,750.

School cadets controlled by Education Board.

Rifles to be furnished.