

1900.

NEW ZEALAND.

D E F E N C E :

COMMISSIONS OFFERED TO NEW-ZEALANDERS IN IMPERIAL ARMY.

Laid on the Table of the House of Representatives by Leave.

Government House, New Zealand, Wellington.

TELEGRAM from the Right Hon. Secretary of State for the Colonies to His Excellency the Governor, dated London, 20th March.

SECRETARY of State for War offers ten Royal Artillery and twenty Infantry commissions to gentlemen selected by you after consultation with the Imperial officer commanding local forces. Candidates must be British subjects, of good character, between twenty and thirty, unmarried, and passed by Medical Board as "fit for service," according to Regulations 1899, paragraph 14, Appendix 1. Send names of nominees, with certificate of birth, stating branch for which recommended, and, in case of Royal Artillery, whether field artillery or garrison artillery preferred. The preference of candidates will be considered as far as possible.

TELEGRAM from Lord Roberts, V.C., Commander-in-Chief, South Africa, to His Excellency the Governor, dated Bloemfontein, 24th April.

I UNDERSTAND that a certain number of commissions in the regular forces have been placed at your disposal. What number of these may I recommend for your officers and men of the contingents from your colony now serving under me, and for what branch of the service?

TELEGRAM from His Excellency the Governor to Lord Roberts, V.C., Commander-in-Chief, Bloemfontein.

REFERRING to your telegram 24th April, your offer accepted with thanks. Twenty commissions at your disposal for the members of the five New Zealand contingents. Our officers will render every assistance. Many officers are serving as privates. Retain some for the Beira Contingent. Branch of service whatever most suitable.

(Copy of Despatch.)

(No. 335/1900.)

MY LORD,—

Wellington, 11th May, 1900.

I have the honour to enclose you a recorder of telegram sent to you on the 10th May, with the full text of the memorandum on which it is based.

I have, &c.,

Field-Marshal Lord Roberts, V.C., &c.

RANFURLY.

Premier's Office, Wellington, 9th May, 1900.

MEMORANDUM for His Excellency the GOVERNOR.

THE Premier presents his compliments, and begs respectfully to inform His Excellency that his Advisers, after considering the offer of the Imperial authorities to grant to New Zealand thirty commissions in the British army, recommend that Field-Marshal Lord Roberts, having kindly offered to distribute such commissions as we desired, be requested to distribute twenty of them. In offering this kind assistance Lord Roberts has paid a great compliment to the colony, which is heartily appreciated. Ministers feel assured that the officers will render every assistance in selecting those most worthy, deserving, and efficient to hold commissions. It is also the desire of the Government that the commissions shall be spread over the whole of the contingents; that being in the ranks or non-commissioned officers shall not be a bar to commissions being granted to them, and that commissioned officers, subalterns, and troopers shall participate if they are deserving of promotion.

Attention is drawn to this as there are a number of men acting as subalterns in the ranks who hold colonial commissions, and who effaced their rank for the purpose of serving in subordinate positions in the contingents. His Excellency's Advisers also deem it advisable to draw the atten-

tion of the Field-Marshal, perhaps unnecessarily, to the fact that a number of contingents have only just reached South Africa, and that, whilst distributing some commissions to the contingents which have already done much excellent service, a few should be held in hand by the Field-Marshal for distribution amongst those recently arrived; for we feel confident that, if opportunities arise, they will maintain as high a standard of efficiency and bravery as those of our contingents whose services and bravery have been so highly commended. In respect to the remaining ten commissions offered, Ministers deem it advisable and expedient that the same be held over for future distribution.

In conclusion, the Premier wishes His Excellency to inform the Secretary of State what conclusions have been arrived at, and hopes that the same will be deemed satisfactory and approved; also that the holding-over of the ten commissions may not cause any inconvenience, and be assented to.

R. J. SEDDON.

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