

### CADET CORPS.

I pointed out in my annual report last year the value of the training imparted by the institution of cadet corps, and would beg again to invite consideration to this important matter. I am strongly of opinion that every English-speaking boy throughout the Empire should be trained as a cadet, and that the future safety of the Empire demands either this or conscription.

In this colony there are now forty-six cadet corps under the Defence Department. Their efficiency, generally speaking, is very satisfactory. Fourteen additional corps have been formed during the past year.

Fifteen officers and three non-commissioned officers have passed through the School of Instruction.

The L.M.E. and M.E. carbines which have been withdrawn from adult corps are being issued to cadets.

Only one or two corps have waistbelts, and none bandoliers: as soon as the necessary equipment is available I trust cadet corps will be supplied. I recommend that haversacks be issued to corps.

I beg to recommend that the present issue of ammunition (fifty rounds per cadet) be doubled. Class firing exhausts all the present issue, leaving nothing for practice.

Cadets are allowed to attend camp with adult corps, and good has resulted from this.

Cadet companies should be formed into battalions. On service they would be placed on positions suitable to them, and not amalgamated with adult corps.

### RIFLE CLUBS.

There are 109 rifle clubs in existence. Their present position is unsatisfactory to all concerned. It is hoped that this will soon be amended, and that they may shortly form more of an integral part of the Defence Forces than they do at present. Lack of training and discipline, and the open terms for membership as regards age, physical fitness for service, &c., however, render rifle clubs of but small value as a fighting force compared to trained corps.

### NEW ZEALAND DEFENCE FORCES RIFLE ASSOCIATION.

A successful meeting was held at Trentham on the 5th March, 1903, and following days. The total number of entries was 350, against that of 315 in 1902. The competitions were modelled more on service conditions than in previous years. It is hoped a further advance will be made in this direction next year. Young shots were encouraged, and the response and results were satisfactory.

The range is gradually being improved as funds admit of it; it has all the requirements of an excellent one.

No team was sent to compete at Bisley this year, as some of the best shots were unable to leave the colony, and the results of last year did not justify a team being sent unless the services of all such were available.

### CAMPS AND CAMP EQUIPMENT.

It was considered advisable again this year to limit the work done at camps to company-training. Next year an advance on this will, it is hoped, be possible, and that units may be exercised in a scheme on the lines of that on which they would have to act in the event of war.

Greater value is to be looked for from camp training than has formerly been acquired. Where possible camps should be established some miles apart. The troops should be exercised under a "General idea" known to all. "Special ideas" creating situations that might occur in war should be issued for each exercise. These exercises may last one or more days, as circumstances permit. The "Rules for Manœuvres" should be observed, and officers to act as umpires detailed. At the end of each day's work observations by the Umpire-in-Chief should be published and communicated to all concerned. Every endeavour should be made to render the attendance at camps as large as possible. The work there is practical, and a man will learn more in camp in one day than he will in a drill-hall in a month.

A supply of intrenching tools should be provided, and a proportion issued to infantry battalions. The field engineer corps should also be fully equipped in this respect.

### ARMS, EQUIPMENT, AND CLOTHING.

All corps are now armed with the magazine rifle, and twenty-three of the cadet corps with .303 magazine carbines, and the balance of the cadet corps with M.E. carbines. The care of arms by corps shows an improvement, and the annual inspection by qualified armourers now carried out has been productive of much good in this direction.

In very many cases the equipment of corps is incomplete, and this is discouraging to them. A serviceable equipment has been approved, and it is hoped that deficiencies may be met with as little delay as possible.

The control of arms and equipment is still under the department of the Under-Secretary of Defence; this arrangement is unconstitutional and unsatisfactory.

It is hoped that by July, 1904, all corps will be in possession of a service dress (khaki). Few corps are in possession of greatcoats and waterproof sheets; the former are necessary even in peace time, and the latter are essential in war and for manœuvres. A scheme by which Government should clothe the Defence Forces has been submitted. Full dress has been left optional, corps being allowed to supply themselves with it on submitting patterns that are approved of. Full dress is provided for at the expense of corps; it costs the country nothing, and history indicates that dress, next to war, is the best recruiting-sergeant.