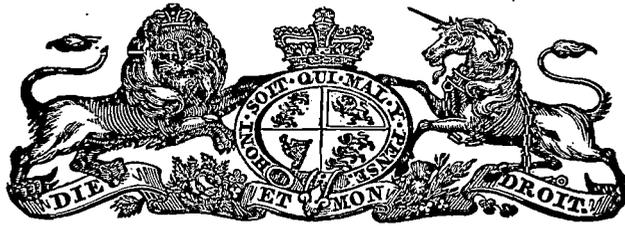


(No. 39.)



1881.

TASMANIA.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

LOCAL FORCES:

REPORT FOR 1880.

Laid upon the Table by Mr. Moore, and ordered by the Council to be printed,
July 19, 1881.



LOCAL FORCES.

1. *Command.*—I have continued to exercise the duties of my office during the past year to the best of my ability, and can only express a hope that it has been to the satisfaction of the Government.

2. *Strength.*—

<i>Designation of Corps.</i>	<i>Efficients.</i>	<i>Recruits.</i>	<i>TOTAL.</i>
1. Tasmanian Light Horse	38	2	40
2. N. T. V. Artillery	56	7	63
3. S. T. V. Artillery	157	13	170
4. S. T. V. Rifle Regiment	220	3	223
5. N. T. V. Rifle Regiment	112	26	138
TOTAL.....	583	51	634

3. *Efficiency.*—I can repeat with increased confidence this year my opinion that the Force as a whole consists of a fine body of officers and men of marked intelligence, good physique, and capable of fulfilling all the requirements of actual service if supplied with the necessary equipment.

4. *Officer Commanding Northern Division.*—Lieutenant-Colonel Home has continued in charge of the Northern Division.

5. *Majors.*—(a.) Major P. O. Fysh has throughout the year been in command of the Southern Tasmanian Volunteer Rifle Regiment.

(b.) Major Harrap has continued in charge of the Artillery of the Northern Division.

(c.) Major Crowther is a new promotion since last report : he has continued to command his corps.

(d.) Major Just is also a new promotion. This has involved an increase of responsibility, owing to the reorganisation, which has placed him in command of a distinct corps.

6. *Captains.*—Remarking first upon those of Artillery at Launceston, I found that Captain Reid was not commanding his own Battery, but that Major Harrap with the best intention performed that office in addition to his own. I set this right by an order confining each officer to his proper sphere, so that Captain Reid now commands his Battery in all matters of detail, while Major Harrap is exercised in his own capacity as Officer commanding the Artillery branch of service in the Northern Division.

At Hobart, in spite of the reorganisation having been in force from the commencement of the year, no application has been made to me to fill the two vacant captaincies of Artillery.

At Launceston, Lieutenant Rooke has been promoted to the rank of Captain, and appointed Paymaster of the Northern Tasmanian Rifle Regiment.

7. *Non-Commissioned Officers and Rank and File.*—The Non-Commissioned Officers, both North and South, have all done their duty without giving me occasion to find a fault, and the Privates have been equally well conducted in their general behaviour.

Some of the recruits of the N. T. V. Rifle Regiment whom I inspected were rather too young and under standard height, but I did not reject them, as they were growing youths and of a desirable class.

Brigade drill has been adopted in all Commandant's parades, so that instead of the practice of different branches of the service being mixed up in one battalion, as was the case a year ago, each corps now takes its proper position as it would do in the field, and all work together harmoniously in manœuvring.

Every opportunity has been taken to instruct the troops at Hobart and at Launceston in out-post duty, both by lecture and in the field, so far as circumstances permitted. I have felt the drawback of only being able to secure two mid-day parades during the year,—viz. on the Queen's Birthday and the Prince of Wales' Wedding-day ; but during the summer months advantage was taken of the long evenings to secure many twilight drills.

8. *Gun and Musketry Practices.*—The Artillery practice this year was particularly good. This is due, no doubt, in great measure to the excellent field range finder of Captain Watkin, R.A., which was obtained by Government and used for this purpose.

The musketry practice in both the Rifle Regiments was very good, the number of marksmen and first-class shots being, in the Northern Rifles, $10 + 15 = 25$; and in the Southern Rifles, $26 + 9 = 35$.

The Northern Rifles were not enabled to perform volley and independent firing this year, because the butts were not in sufficient repair to admit of these practices being carried out with safety to the public, owing to the necessary funds not having been sanctioned in time.

£100 granted by Government for prizes for good shooting this year were allotted to the several corps in proportion to their strength; and the sharp competition this created has well repaid the expenditure.

9. *Cavalry.*—The Launceston Light Horse have held together, and even increased their strength by a third of their number, during the last year in spite of every difficulty. The officers and men of this corps supply their own horses and equipments, and only asked for £50 during the twelvemonth to pay a drill instructor, which, however, was not granted.

10. *Staff Officers.*—Referring to Staff Officers, Captain Boddam, Staff Officer of the Local Forces, has continued to afford me assistance in the discharge of my duties. Without desiring in any way to blame him, it is only right to mention that whilst engaged in engineering I found his time was too much taken up with it to admit of his giving all the attention requisite to his work as Staff Officer.

Captain Hunt, Staff Officer Northern Division, has received promotion during the last twelve months.

11. *Bands.*—There are three good bands in the Force.

While the Artillery and Infantry of the South have each their own band, in the North only one has hitherto been maintained between Artillery and Infantry. For some reason, which I cannot fathom, the Artillery have signified their intention to withdraw from the support of this band next February. I still entertain a hope that my representations may induce the officers of that fine corps (which is the senior battery in the Colony) to change their minds on this point before that period arrives.

12. *Pioneers.*—There are no pioneers yet.

13. The immediate medical requirements of the Force are met.

14. *Expenditure.*—The estimate for the next twelve months has been prepared in accordance with that sanctioned for the current year with but very slight modification; but my letter, No. 6, dated 28th June, 1880, as well as the present Report, testify to the fact that, whereas the amount is insufficient to place the Defence of the Colony on a safe basis, but very inconsiderable addition would convert it into a real source of security.

15. *Requirements.*—The immediate requirements may be summed up in a few words—viz., great coats, valise equipment, and camp equipage.

16. *Guns.*—I understand that Government have sent the necessary orders for the guns for which Parliament voted £6000.

17. *Ammunition.*—The above remark applies equally to the ammunition for the garrison guns, which, however, has not yet been received.

The supply of ammunition for small arms is sufficient.

The obsolete arms have not yet been sold off as I recommended.

18. *Small Arms.*—The Martini-Henry rifle has not been adopted for our troops, and I am not aware whether any effort has yet been made by Government to retrieve the loss the Colony sustained in being supplied by the Imperial Government with comparatively obsolete rifles instead of with these improved weapons.

19. *Ranges.*—Since last Report a good range has been provided by Government at Sandy Bay, and funds allotted for the necessary repairs to the range at Launceston.

20. *Camp of Instruction.*—No notice whatever, as far as I am aware, was taken of my

suggestion for a camp of exercise. I can only repeat that it is very much needed, and would entail but small expenditure. It merely requires interest to be manifested towards a subject of deep importance to the defence of the Colony. 150,000 Volunteer troops attended the last Brighton Review, which testifies to the necessity of doing something in that way here, especially since Tasmania was the only Colony of the Australian Group which had no troops in camp at Easter.

21. *Engineers.*—An Engineer Corps is as requisite now for the security of the Colony as it was when I pointed out the necessity for one a year ago.

22. *General remarks on the Local Forces.*—The military affairs of Tasmania are in a transition state. A step in the right direction has been taken in carrying out the reorganisation, but time is needed for its completion.

23. *Local Defences.*—A detailed report on the military works of the Colony was furnished on the 10th May, 1880. The greater part of the requirements of the scheme of defence have not yet been provided. These requirements have been fully set forth in memoranda submitted by the Consulting Military Engineer, and the Staff Officer's Reports thereon, to which attention was called in my last Report.

24. With regard to the works existing or now in course of construction, Queen's Battery, which was completed before submission of last Report, is self-defensible and thoroughly equipped, with the exception of the ammunition, which, as pointed out last year, is of obsolete pattern and most unserviceable.

25. Alexandra Battery is now nearly completed, all the heavy work being finished. It is a fine battery, and a credit to the Colony. It requires to be made thoroughly defensible, and field works should be added to protect the rear. The necessity for this was illustrated in the field operations conducted under my orders on the Prince of Wales' Wedding-day. The armament of this battery is in the Colony, and three out of the five guns it will need are already mounted.

26. Kangaroo Bluff Battery is almost half finished. With the exception of two smooth-bore guns, its armament has yet to be procured.

27. Launceston has yet to be provided for. In conjunction with Lieut.-Colonel Home and Captain Boddam I made this year a reconnaissance of the River Tamar, and submitted to the Hon. the Colonial Secretary a complete scheme of defence for that river.

28. No Torpedo defences for either Hobart or Launceston have yet been provided.

29. A survey of the roads on both banks of the Tamar as far as Rosevears, near which the position was selected for its defence by the Committee of which I was President, was made by Capt. Boddam, and a map prepared by him was forwarded with that Report.

Whilst I have been writing the above, an order has been received by the Staff Officer from the Hon. the Colonial Secretary to prepare a survey of all roads, tracks, &c. leading from likely landing-places to Hobart on both sides of the harbour.

30. I repeat my remarks of last year, that the whole scheme of Local Defence having been conceived by highly experienced Engineers of long standing, and approved by the Government of this Colony, it would be out of place for me to refer to it in detail more than to assure the Government that it is the aim of this Office to work out that scheme in its entirety, availing itself of such opportunities as the present for expediting its completion, with a view to being prepared for any eventuality. I desire, however, to place on record my opinion that excessive expenditure should be avoided, by stretching the construction of the yet unfinished batteries over a longer period than originally contemplated, provided that the interest of the unexpended portion of the loan is not devoted to any other than Defence purposes.

EDWARD FOX ANGELO, *Lieut.-Colonel,*
Commandant Local Forces.

Hobart, 28 June, 1881.