

Lieut.-Col. Hume, A.A.G., Inspector of Volunteers in New Zealand, has spoken out somewhat plainly in his annual report on the volunteer force of that colony. He has felt it his duty to state that many officers of the force are unfitted to command, and the Sydney service papers hint that he is perfectly right. Col. Hume objects to the prevailing system of allowing volunteers to elect their own officers. The report states that the strength of the New Zealand volunteer force on December 31 last was 7,685, divided into 140 corps.

### Suggestions for U. S. Army Reform.

Gen. Lew Wallace advocates the extension of the West Point system to the whole U. S. Army, and his suggestion is embodied in the annual report of the Board of Visitors to the U. S. Military Academy. He says :

"Gen. Grant said the number of cadets ought to be raised to 1,000. The opinion of the wisest soldier of his day leaves little room for debate except as to how the addition should be made, and to what extent. It is very remarkable that of a people martial in spirit as any in the world, the youth most desirable for soldiers cannot be induced in the present status of the Army to enter its ranks. Of the many reasons for this circumstance one must be given—as a rule enlistment is the end of social standing. To cure this evil every inducement to become a cadet—certainty of advanced education, hope of commissions, elevation socially—should be offered.

"The proposition is not to multiply West Points, but simply to extend the system of education and discipline to the whole Army. In that particular, every fixed post in the country, now or hereafter to be established, might be converted into a military academy. The company officer is the true instructor for his men. Indeed, given the right kind of men, if an officer should protest against the duty he should at once be suspected of incapacity and disposed of by retracy."

Gen. Wallace enumerates 14 essentials to the proposed re-establishment, among them the following :

1. A term of enlistment for five years.
2. Courses of education similar to those at the Academy.
3. Company officers personal instructors of the men.
4. Heavy penalties for humiliating personal treatment of enlisted men by officers, such as subjecting them to menial service or to manual labour not strictly within the limit of honourable duty.
5. Selections of a limited number (say 300 or 500) of enlisted men at the end of their fourth year of service for transfer to West Point, there to undergo a course of final instruction extending through the fifth year, the selection to be from the entire body of fourth year men, according to merit.
6. All enlisted men not chosen for the final course at the Academy to be discharged at the end of the fourth year.
7. Commissions to fill vacancies in the lowest grade to be issued at the end of the fifth year to the men of the best standing and greatest general proficiency, all other modes of original appointment to the Army to be abolished.
8. Men who fail to receive commissions to receive diplomas and be discharged.

The General thus sums up the results of the system he proposes : "Giving three officers to each company of 100 men, a calculation, upon the hypothesis of an annual discharge of 3,000 soldiers, can be easily made of the supply of commissioned officers furnishable by the new system. In a marvellously short period there would be officers ready-made for a million men. In the next place the popular dream of a democratic army is nonsense. Discipline implies despotism. It is not idle, however, to talk of an army democratic in personnel and sentiment. The retracy of educated soldiers in the walks of civil life would, it is believed, accomplish this end. Certainly the present system does not contribute to it. The foregoing is not aimed as a blow at West Point. If one thinks otherwise the reply ought to suffice that the Army of the United States is not a toy kept for the amusement of anybody."

The Board in conclusion say : "The United States Military Academy at West point belongs to the people, and it deserves the love, admiration and love of the people."

The *Naval and Military Argus* is severe upon British naval chaplains. We have no objection, it says, "to naval chaplains as individuals, we object to them in their official capacity. We have tossed many of them for a whiskey and soda, we have been rooked by them at loo, we have heard them utter very elongated d—s, etc., especially etc., but we have never once been asked by any of them as to our soul. We were once inquisitive on the subject ourselves, but failed to get any answer except an offer to 'flutter for a split.' £31,900! (the cost of the chaplains); 31,900 golden reasons for getting rid of white-necked gentlemen from H. M. ships, where they eat the bread of idleness, and lay up treasure, but not for Heaven."

### The Australian Defences.

From the last Australian mail further particulars have been obtained of Major-General Edwards' report on the organization of the defence forces of Australia, which has recently attracted much attention. Gen. Edwards considers that the Australian colonies offer such a rich and tempting prize that if they had to rely on their own resources they would certainly be called upon to fight for their independence, and without any cohesion or power of combination their position would be one of great danger. He recommends that the defence forces be placed at once upon a proper footing by such organization as will enable the colonies to combine for mutual defence. To effect this he proposes that on a population basis Victoria and New South Wales should furnish three brigades each, and South Australia and Queensland one each. The Governments should agree to organize their forces on the same system, and an officer of the rank of lieutenant-general should be appointed to inspect in time of peace, and command the whole in time of war.

The following are extracts from the General's report :—"A common system of defence can only be carried out by a federation of the military forces of the colonies, each state agreeing to organize its forces on the same system, although they may continue to pay and maintain them separately. Some additional expenditure will be required to carry out these proposals, but its amount is inconsiderable in comparison with the results which will be obtained. Comparing the present expenditure of the different colonies with that of the mother country, and even with the United States of America, it cannot be said that the burden of defence presses heavily upon the great resources of the Australian colonies. While England expends one-third of her income on defence and the United States one-sixth, Australia expends one-fortieth. There are other, but not less important, points which cannot be considered in detail, such as the supply of rifle ammunition, the difficulties of which will be overcome when the manufactory now being established at Melbourne is finished, and which must be in sufficient quantities to meet the demands which would be made when a state of war becomes probable and the whole of the forces are mobilised for further training. Also the supply of ammunition for the field artillery and a common armament for the field batteries, the establishment of a railway corps, and of proper cadres for the medical—a well-thought-out scheme for which has been prepared by the principal medical officer of New South Wales—and commissariat corps, and a common federal ordnance store and gun wharf, and a federal camp of instruction to be formed from time to time by the forces of contiguous colonies.

"My proposals, briefly summarized, are as follows :—

- "1. Federation of the forces.
- "2. An officer of the rank of lieutenant-general to be appointed ; to advise and inspect in peace, and command in war.
- "3. A uniform system of organization and armament, and a common Defence Act.
- "4. Amalgamation of the permanent forces into a 'Fortress Corps.'
- "5. A Federal Military College for the education of the officers.
- "6. The extension of the rifle clubs.
- "7. A uniform gauge for the railways, and their extension to Western Australia and Port Darwin.
- "8. A federal small-arm manufactory, gun wharf, and ordnance store.

"In making these propositions I wish it to be understood that I do not commit myself in any way as to the sufficiency of these forces for the defence of Australia. The proposals which I have made are based upon the number of troops now maintained by the different colonies ; but what the actual strength should be depends upon political considerations, and the possible combinations among the different foreign powers. Looking to the state of affairs in Europe, and to the fact that it is the unforeseen which happens in war the defence forces should at once be placed on a proper footing ; but this is, however, quite impossible without a federation of the forces of the different colonies."

### New Military Books.

[Published by Gale & Polden, of Chatham, Eng.]

COMPANY DRILL MADE EASY. By Sergt-Major Gordon. 2nd edition, revised, with 54 illustrations, in accordance with Army Orders of March 1889. Cloth, pp 94. Price, 1s. 6d.. or 15 shillings per dozen.

The title of this work is no misnomer. It does make company drill easy of comprehension. This is in a great measure due to the excellent plates and the clear way in which the work is arranged. It is as simple as A B C, and while it is thorough and comprehensive, it leaves nothing to be imagined by the student, as every single movement is explained under all the various positions. The directions for all ranks, and the explanations of the words of command are clear and concise. The book is an admirable one and should be possessed by all who are endeavouring to master the intricacies of drill.