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THE PATRIOT BAND - THE SCHOOL CADETS FROM THEIR EVOLUTION
TO THE GREAT WAR.

Thesis presented in partial fulfilment of
the requirements for the degree of Master
of Arts in History at Massey University.

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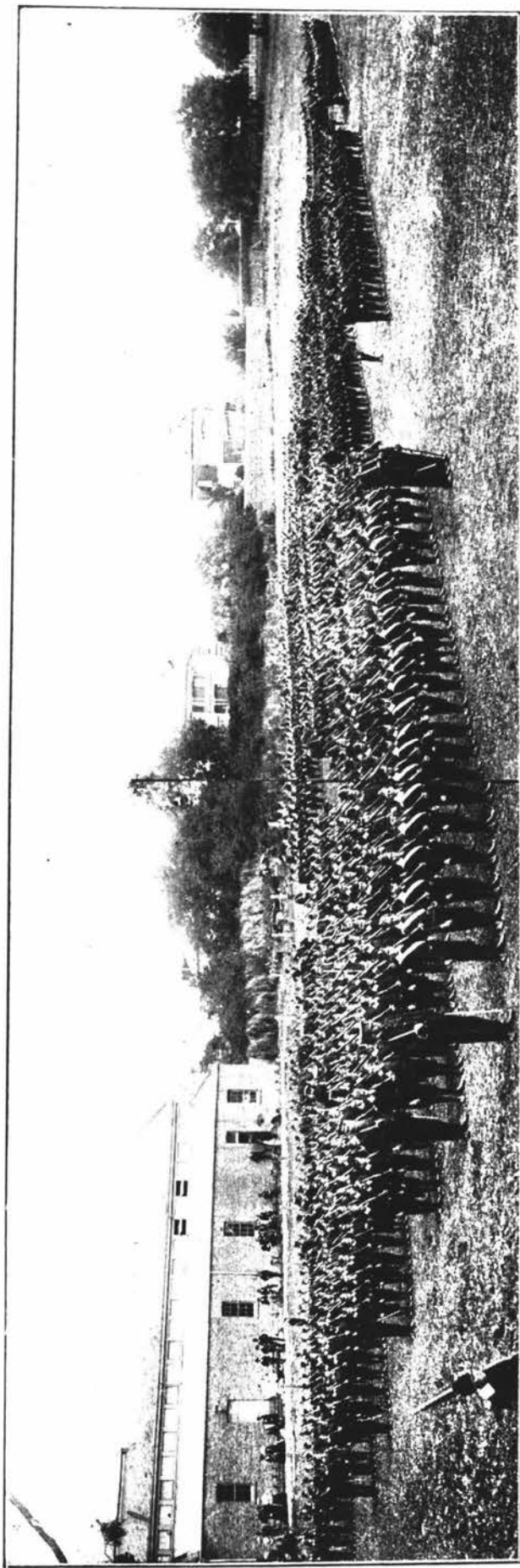
ABBREVIATIONS.

AJHR	Appendices to the Journals of the House of Representatives
AS	Auckland Star
LT	Lyttleton Times
MAGSB	Minutes of the Auckland Grammar Schools' Board
NZG	New Zealand Gazette
NZH	New Zealand Herald
NZPD	New Zealand Parliamentary Debates.
OTD	Otago Daily Times
WEBM	Wellington Education Board Minutes

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OAMARU NORTH SCHOOL COMPANY CADETS, WINNERS OF THE SOUTH ISLAND GOVERNMENT CHALLENGE SHIELD FOR 1907 WITH A SCORE OF 765 OUT OF A POSSIBLE 840.



INSPECTION BY HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR (LORD FLUNKET) OF THE 1ST, 2ND, AND 3RD AUCKLAND PUBLIC SCHOOL, CADET BATTALIONS ON THE OCCASION OF THE PRESENTATION OF THE NORTH ISLAND CHALLENGE SHIELD TO THE ONEHONGA SCHOOL, CADETS, ON THE 20TH FEBRUARY, 1906.

The writing of history consists in the complementary activities of analysis and reflection. A study of the school cadets in New Zealand from their evolution in the old established colleges till 1914, provides an opportunity for both these activities to be attempted through the medium of a relatively small but highly defined topic.

As an institution, the cadets provide an interesting study in themselves, for by minutely observing the specialised activities of a large section of New Zealand society, namely its children together with those especially concerned with the cadets through education or defence, it is possible to gain a detailed understanding and insight into their beliefs and assumptions. The activities and attitudes of teachers, concerned military men, articulate members of the general public and where possible pupils, will each provide a slightly different vantage point from which to reconstruct this picture.

One also learns something of the values people wanted their children inculcated with, for children then as now went to school amidst certain social, civic and moral assumptions possessed by society at large, and more especially by their educators the teachers, inspectors and administrators. The books they read, the activities they took part in, became necessarily infused within the cadet system itself, for it was after all but a practical extension of classroom activity. To many New Zealanders, "the good schoolboy", "the good cadet" and "the good future citizen" were identical.

Teachers for the most part seem to have shared these assumptions whilst like teachers today, being somewhat suspicious of any dissipation of their teaching time into extra-curricular activities. It is when "teacher" singular is substituted for the plural form that difficulties appear, for what did the individual teacher who was often apathetic towards departmental directives believe of the cadet movement?

Again, one can assuredly discuss the value systems and framework in which the teacher taught though an acquaintance with contemp-

rary school books and journals, but this is not to say that all teachers actually taught these ideals.

Inspectors' reports contained in the Appendices to the Journals of the House of Representatives provide the opinions of men who were well acquainted with the latest in educational and political developments whilst being teachers themselves, for the most part practical and realistic enough to gauge the educational process room by room through their district.

One can question still, whether such men were representative of the average classroom teacher, whose views for the most part seemed to have remained inaudible. Today the New Zealand Educational Institute provides a forum for the teacher but from 1883 when the institute was formed, till 1913, the organisation pursued its original aim: that of improving the teachers' working conditions and striving to gain official recognition of its work as a prerequisite to broader interests. Only after 1913 did the Institute begin to take an active interest in the aims and philosophy of education, but by that time the organisation and basis of the cadet movement had fundamentally changed.¹

Newspapers provide infrequent and indirect, though often tantalising indications of teachers' views on such specific issues as cadet camps and Saturday instruction. Quite often the passing of an important act concerning cadets, such as the Defence Amendment Act of 1910, provided the occasion for editorial analysis, but editors could be equally provoked into comment by such comparatively trifling events as the success of a local school in shooting or the publication of a reader's letter on cadets. Thus newspaper evidence even more than other sources can depend on luck as well as judgement.

One is therefore left with two questions. Firstly, did teachers see cadets as an important part of a child's education, or as just another chore? Secondly, given society's emphasis on patriotism and imperialism especially from the 1890's to 1914, did such sentiments provide a veil through which teachers unquestioningly looked at the world, or were they after all a convenient halo to be cast

¹J. Caughley, Inauguration Address, New Plymouth, January 1913, in Reports of the Annual Meetings of the Council of the Institute. Wellington 1958.

aside after infrequent inspectoral visits? We shall probably never know.

Among the military, a detailed analysis of what cadet instructors believed themselves to be accomplishing can elucidate their attitudes towards New Zealand's defence and how education could serve this goal. Although it must be remembered that such men could well be atypical soldiers, the comparatively small numbers of them involved make their attitudes somewhat less obscure than those of teachers.

The advantages of such minute observations become particularly important when one turns attention to the high schools and colleges of the period, for here any sweeping generalisation can be dangerous. Their peculiar blend of pioneer hardiness and English public school exclusiveness gave each school a different character which helped determine the distinctiveness of each high school corps.

Although such detailed analysis has obvious merits, it does possess certain disadvantages. Firstly it raises as many questions as it solves and the answers tend to lie outside the immediate framework of the topic, either within the field of New Zealand education or wider still in the national and international situation. Secondly, history is not a static process: it contains movements and trends that need to be explained if possible. Thus along with analysis there must be reflection. The school cadet topic can also be used as a springboard from which to investigate specific problems within New Zealand education or society in general, for such an activity is pertinent to an understanding of this age. In addition events occurring within the school cadet situation tend to mirror complementary processes in education, and to a lesser extent in the development of New Zealand and other western states. In this sense they are all related aspects of a single theme.

Accordingly the thesis follows four somewhat arbitrarily chosen chronological periods, each revealing a distinctive phase in the history of the school cadets. To match this, events within the field of New Zealand education have been similarly periodised as have (to a lesser extent) events in the development of New Zealand itself. This is perhaps to strengthen the telescopic value of the topic at some expense to its essential continuity, but provided

the limitations of such an approach are realised, the advantages outweigh any faults.

Although the 1877 Education Act made provision for cadet corps or detachments to be set up in schools, the various education boards were left to their own discretion. Thus development was rather uneven with the richer boards tending to show more interest than the poorer boards, struggling with heavy financial and administrative problems. Between 1877 and about 1896 however, the cadets made fairly rapid, if sporadic progress determined more by unrelated events external to them, than by specific action of the government through the education department or boards

Some parallels can be found within the sphere of education itself during this period. The 1877 Education Act had in general made education free, secular and compulsory, and real progress was being made towards the building up of a national system of education, though the quality of that education was extremely uneven throughout the colony, ranging from the Nelson Board which had operated a system not much different from the national system itself and accordingly possessed a nucleus of trained personnel, to Auckland which suffered from its excessive area, poorly trained teachers and otherwise slipshod administration.²

Just how far New Zealand was from the goals implied by the 1877 Act was illustrated by the proliferation of local power at the expense of the centre. Throughout the colony salary scales for teachers differed from board to board, each of which stringently maintained its own classification scheme for the appointment of teachers, while school appointments remained in the hands of local school committees. The period from 1877 to 1896 was therefore one of spectacular advance, hampered by much inertia and lingering anachronisms for cadets and education generally.

From 1896 to 1902 the ground work for rapid development was laid. Public opinion, supplemented by the expert advice of education

² M.D. Heatherton, "The History of English Influence on Educational Thought and Practice in New Zealand," M.A. thesis, Canterbury University, 1932, p.56.

and defence spokesmen was in accord with the wishes of parliamentarians, particularly of the Liberals for an effective centralised, and therefore departmentally controlled cadet scheme, all of which culminated in the gazetting of explicit regulations for the formation and control of the public school corps.³

At least part of the development can be explained by the appointment of George Hogben to the position of Inspector-General of Schools in 1899, for by 1901 he had helped initiate a rapid period of reform with the passing of the Public School Teachers Salaries Act, which made salaries standard throughout the colony, and by lending his support to a scheme of superannuation for teachers.⁴ The period 1902 till approximately 1910 saw a continuation of reform within the educational system, and perhaps not surprisingly this was the heyday of the cadets as well.

Perhaps two-thirds of the male children in public schools between the ages of twelve and fourteen, supplemented by a somewhat higher proportion in the high schools, donned cadet uniforms and took part in weekly drills, target practices, and marches in formation for the benefit of distinguished overseas visitors. Some of this extraordinary activity again can be explained by considering parallels in educational administration and philosophy during these years, for this period saw attempts to make the boards and their employees the inspectors less autonomous and more responsible to the Education Department. At the same time endeavours were made to widen the scope of secondary education to allow as many children as possible to enjoy its benefits. It is interesting to consider what influence this latter effort might have had upon the concept of the high school cadets as an elite cadre.

By 1900 John Dewey had established himself as a leading American educationalist whose ideas were noticed both in Europe and in Australasia. Dewey taught that schools were simply embryonic societies, and as such should reveal to society's young members the intricacies of industrial production, science and technology, and citizenship of a modern state in which most would take their place

³NZG No 37, pp1058-1059.

⁴A.H. McLintock (ed) An Encyclopedia of New Zealand Wellington 1966. Vol 1 p.523.

not as professors or clergymen, but as factory workers, farmers, and carpenters. Again it is worth considering the effect of such a philosophy on the cadet movement. Were the ideas that produced New Zealand's first technical colleges connected in any way with those that helped produce the cadet system after 1902?

The 1910 to 1914 period saw the decline of the Junior Cadets and the integration of the Senior (High School) Cadets into a national defence system. Once again there are parallels with educational administration in particular, as this period showed signs that progress had gone too far, too fast. Rethinking occurred in educational theory (though this is better discussed along with international influences), which in its turn led to a resolution at the Inspectors Conference of 1910 asking for the demilitarisation of the Junior Cadets.⁵

There is therefore little doubt that much of what was happening in the school cadets can be explained through a parallel study of education itself, noting its philosophical, administrative and financial changes. Nor must one neglect the possibility that the cadet movement itself, once underway as a national movement, provided its own internal dynamic.

Nevertheless it is probable that the answers to many questions lie outside the sphere of formal education, in what was occurring in society at large. The education system is related in a similar way to these events as the cadets were to education. Again the move is from the specific to the general, and again a similar periodisation is valid though perhaps not to the same extent.

H.C.V. Jeffreys has written, "Education is in fact nothing other than the whole life of a community, viewed from the particular standpoint of learning to live that life."⁶ Although he wrote for a modern audience with three generations of mass education behind it, it was true that by 1877 something of this view was influencing New Zealand administrators, concerned with consolidating the process of national development.

Before the 1870's New Zealand was little more than a collection of rather isolated frontier settlements, tenuously linked, with

⁵AJHR 1910, E-ID, p32.

⁶H.C.V. Jeffreys, Glaucon, in AKC. Ottoway, Education and Society, Plymouth, 1962, p.7.

great local variations. Vogel's development policy of the 1870's led to the abolition of the provinces (1875) which in its turn necessitated the Education Act of 1877. Although to some extent the impact of Vogel's policy helped turn New Zealand into a single community, local rivalries were still strong and the 1877 Act itself was expected to provide a decentralised system of public school education with the balance of power held equally between education boards and school committees.⁷ Together with the long depression which began from about 1881, this state of affairs affected both educational and cadet progress adversely.

By the 1890's the colonists had become more acutely aware of possessing specific national characteristics which in some way differentiated them from Englishmen. At the same time successive Imperial Conferences marked them clearly as part of a world empire. New Zealanders were the better part of the British race that had chosen to live in the southern hemisphere. The two sentiments were not necessarily incompatible and the course of the South African war intensified both. The 1902 regulations concerning cadets marked the culmination of this process, and in its turn influenced the school cadets.

From about 1909 till 1914, New Zealand society faced a critical period of readjustment on the political and philosophical levels. Rising international tension necessitated the growth of serious New Zealand war preparations after 1900, and to some extent it appears that the original conception of the cadets became a casualty of this. Organised protests against the introduction of partial conscription grew markedly from 1909 and the cadets suffered from this, though comparatively little effort was directed specifically at them by anti-militarists.

By about 1910, educational philosophy was again, like defence thinking, undergoing great changes and this was particularly evident in the field of physical education. Evidence from the Inspectors Conference of 1910 and the Royal Commission on Education (1912),

⁷A.H. McLintock (ed), An Encyclopedia of New Zealand, Wellington 1966, vol 1.

suggests a new emphasis on the developing child with both physical and mental processes being seen as complementary. It might well be asked to what extent these ideas were decisive for the cadets, for according to these views military drill could not only be regarded as worthless, but perhaps even harmful to the growing child.

Overseas developments, particularly in the fields of education and defence were very important in influencing changes within New Zealand. Conscription by ballot had become common among the European powers excepting Britain, by the 1880's and by the early 1900's the size of armies had greatly increased. From the time of the dreadnought scare (1909), the Great Powers inexorably began to weigh numbers and resources against probable military opponents, for war was becoming to be recognised as a test of factories and resources as well as of armies. Such events explain the new seriousness in New Zealand's defence preparation after 1909, and the discarding of weak or inefficient military units.

Overseas developments were also of importance in educational philosophy. Britain, America and Switzerland provided models for New Zealand to emulate. In the early 1900's, Dewey's condemnation of the old almost medieval school curriculum as it then existed in many countries did not pass unnoticed in New Zealand and helped to inspire the modern view of education as an activity of the whole community. By 1900, however educational philosophy like defence had reached a point where drastic re-analysis was necessary. Working models were needed and here the English Board of Education's 1909 Syllabus of Physical Exercises became influential, again making itself felt during the 1912 Royal Commission on Education.

This brief Synopsis demonstrates some of the values and perhaps some of the dangers of relating a small topic first to its immediate field and then to broader historical themes. Of course there are relevant questions which, while not exactly lending themselves to such periodisation, can be pursued from the topic basis. In this category are certain less definable more fluid movements within New Zealand society such as patriotism, racial attitudes, drunkenness, and larrikinism. It is possible if not entirely probable, to link these fluid movements together in order to see the

school cadets as a related aspect of a single theme running throughout New Zealand history; that of plugging the gap between reality and aspiration. In the minds of the pioneers, the ideal of building a utopian society was very strongly entrenched. However the 1890's saw the second generation of colonists acutely aware of the disjunction (symptomised by mental and physical disease, larrikinism and drunkenness) between the dreams of their fathers and colonial actuality, for which they envisaged two solutions. Firstly they could turn the utopian proposition into a rational proposition: secondly they could amend the environment in order to heal the disjunction.⁸ The first solution was provided by the election of the Liberals in 1891 and their energetic use of the state in the economic sphere. One aspect of the second solution was the formation of a colony wide system of school cadets. Perhaps the cadets themselves, like defence preparations, represented an over-reaction to crisis, for they were not merely a mass movement but a "cordon sanitaire" directed against the new and unhealthy features in the environment which seemed to threaten any progression towards a utopian society. Seen this way, the cadets became a natural, even necessary phenomenon that marked New Zealand's progress from a rural frontier orientated community to a sizable, urban and partially industrial society, where the individualism of the nineteenth century had to conform to the farm-factory-hearth organisation of the twentieth century.

Thus in examining the progress of the school cadets from their beginnings till 1914, two purposes will be served. Firstly, by placing one facet of New Zealand society under the microscope it should be possible to closely examine New Zealanders of an earlier time involved in an activity which by its very nature reveals their beliefs and assumptions. Secondly, in order to be aware of all that comes within and beyond the topic's scope, it will be necessary to turn a telescope upon the whole of New Zealand society between these years, and in so doing tap the main themes running through the history of a developing nation.

⁸I am indebted to Professor W.H. Oliver of the Massey University History Department for suggesting this line of inquiry.

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