

Dimly conscious of their dilemma, those responsible for the military occupation of New Zealand tried to shield their scheme from public criticism by keeping awkward facts and hostile comment out of the newspapers, denying to anti-militarists the right of meeting in customary out-door places, and transferring some of the power of inflicting penalties from the open law courts to the comparative secrecy of the barracks. The dearest rights and liberties of Englishmen must be destroyed if conscription is to have a chance of success.

The Minister for Defence has admitted in Parliament that "a good many" youths who have ignored the law have not been prosecuted, and that "many of them" have gone away and cannot be found. Nevertheless, according to the latest official return, there had been up to June 30th, 1913, a period of two years, 3,108 convictions; 241 lads had been convicted twice, and 43 three times—for so long as a lad stays away from drill he must be punished again and again. One youth was punished eight times in eighteen months for refusing to comply with the Defence Act, and several times for street speaking and similar "offences."

The "Repeal," the organ of the Passive Resisters' Union, for October, 1913, states that nearly 100 boys have been imprisoned for non-compliance and about the same number sent to military detention—200 in all. The population of New Zealand is only one million, so that, at this rate, if the National Service League had its way in this country, we should have to reckon upon sending some 9,000 British and Irish boys to gaol in little more than two years.

One of the officers, speaking of military detention, said that, when they got the boys into

the forts, they would make them drill or break their hearts. They tried.

#### THE PRISONERS OF RIPA ISLAND.

There was trouble in various places, but it reached a climax at Fort Jervis, on Ripa Island, Lyttelton Harbour. To this fortress thirteen youths from the city of Christchurch and the West Coast were committed during the month of June, 1913, to undergo military detention. Their names were: Reginald Williams, J. E. Nuttall, Robert McTaggart, Walter J. Hooper, H. Guthardt, James K. Worrall, H. W. Thackwell, Edward Hannam, William George Robson, John McTaggart, J. Coppersmith, Thomas Nuttall and Edward Edwards. They all refused to drill, and for some days no great efforts were made to induce them to do so. Their parents and a few other people were allowed to visit them, and they could receive and send letters.

"We were living excellently," writes Williams, "and enjoying ourselves. The food was good and there was plenty of it. We all lived in the barrack room, and a very happy family we were. . . . The work that we did consisted for the most part of cleaning and sweeping our quarters, wash-house, yards, lavatories, etc."

Ordered to help in the dismounting of a gun and to unload some coal, the boys struck, but after two days on half-rations, during which they were confined two in a cell, they were allowed to go back to the old conditions in the barrack room. They agreed to work, and the lieutenant in charge told them, according to Williams, that he would not give them work that was against their principles. The events of the next few days can best be told in the words of the boys themselves, written in the barracks under all the stress and