

one at the depôt, and a few non-commissioned officers, who had been ordered here for the purpose, and as many constables as could at the time be spared from duty, the duties to be performed in Wellington being numerous, and the strength at this station being then very inconsiderable. I thus, by small classes at a time, completed the instruction of all the non-commissioned officers and constables at the depôt by the 18th of May last. The figure of merit obtained by these classes may, I think, be considered satisfactory, viz:—116.70 being only 8.30 points below the figure set down in the book of Regulations as very good, and being 16.70 points above what is there shewn as good, viz:—100. Recruiting having recommenced, and other non-commissioned officers having arrived here from districts for instruction, another class has been formed, and is now in progress of instruction.

2. *Non-Commissioned Officers trained as Musketry Drills.*—Those non-commissioned officers who have gone through the course here, and have returned to their districts, I consider well qualified to communicate instruction in musketry, though, no doubt, in different degrees. One of them I have already brought to your notice as an especially efficient instructor, and he has been sent to the large and important district of Waikato.

3. *Preliminary Drills.*—The Preliminary drills have been carefully conducted, and have greatly exceeded in number those absolutely required by the regulations.

4. *Target and Judging Distance practice.*—The firing singly, the independent, and the volley firings, and the skirmishing practice, have been executed strictly in accordance with the Regulations. This, I think, was the first occasion, upon which the two latter practices have ever been carried out by any of the Colonial forces in New Zealand; and in one of the skirmishing practices, an average of 19 points was made, being 5 points above the figure set down in the Regulations as being very good, viz:—14 points.

5. *Company and Recruits Drill and Practice Returns.*—The non-commissioned officers have been thoroughly instructed in the method of keeping company and recruits practice returns. A number of printed forms of these returns have been obtained from the Government printing office, sufficient to meet the requirements of the force for a long time to come.

6. *Practice Registers and Diagrams.*—I have also obtained a large supply of printed registers and diagrams, and they are kept at all practices according to Regulation.

7. *Ranges and Musketry articles.*—The Adelaide Rifle Ranges at Wellington, are moderately good up to 600 yards, but inconvenient through being partially intercepted by swamps. The targets are old, and the marker's butts badly constructed. The supply of musketry articles at the depôt is sufficient, but as yet, there is no such supply at the out-stations of the force; above all, the want of targets at those stations will form a most serious impediment to the progress of musketry. Wooden and calico targets have, I believe, been used during the last year, and though these may be made to serve the purpose as a temporary expedient, they cannot supply adequately the place of iron targets, without which there can be no really accurate marking under constant fire. I would, therefore, beg to suggest, that it is most necessary that the supply of iron targets for the use of the force should be increased.

8. *Arms and Ammunition.*—The arms which have come under my inspection are good, and kept in good order, but they are unfortunately of a mixed character: being, some long, medium, and short Sniders, which is detrimental to uniformity in practice, as well as in appearance. The long rifle seems to me still to maintain the superiority on the practice range, but I think there is little difference of opinion among those who have seen New Zealand warfare, that the shorter rifles are better in the bush. The ammunition is excellent, miss-fires being unknown.

9. *Instructors.*—The officer mentioned by me in the first paragraph of this report, as having gone through the course with the first-class, Sub-Inspector Ferris, has since rendered me valuable assistance. I need scarcely add, that the Sergeant Instructor of Musketry, Samuel Chandler, is thoroughly efficient, and most zealous in the discharge of his duties.

I have, &c.,

Lieut.-Colonel Moule,
Commanding Armed Constabulary,
Wellington.

W. G. STACK, Captain,
Instructor of Musketry, A. C. Force.

No. 2.

Hon. DEFENCE MINISTER to Lieut.-Colonel MOULE,

Colonial Defence Office,
Wellington, August 21st, 1871.

SIR,—

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 26th ultimo, being the annual report on the general state, efficiency and distribution of the Armed Constabulary Force, for the year ending the 30th June, 1871.

It affords me much pleasure to notice the marked improvement that has taken place during the past year in the efficiency and conduct of the Force, and also to see that the men are employed as much as possible, in addition to their camp duties, on various works of public utility.

I have, &c.,

Lieut.-Colonel Moule,
Commanding Armed Constabulary, Wellington.

DONALD M'LEAN.