

Fencing, &c.—The fencing at Marsland Hill has been completed, and a small paddock fenced, ploughed, and laid down in grass at Urenui. The paddock at Wai-iti has also been re-sown, fences repaired, &c.

Miscellaneous.—Many further improvements have been made at Marsland Hill and Mount Elliot Barracks, such as gravelling the approaches, clearing the paddocks of docks, &c., paving stable yard, and various other necessary and useful works.

The quarters at Wai-iti have also been extensively repaired.

The old Commissariat buildings at the base of Marsland Hill, which are intended to be rebuilt as barracks, &c., at Wai-iti as soon as practicable, have also been taken down, the timber sorted, cleared of nails, &c.

In addition, many other minor works have been completed from time to time during the year, and throughout the district the force has been kept fully employed.

REMARKS.

I have again the honor to report satisfactorily of the state of the force in this district during the past year.

Although, owing to absolutely necessary garrison duties, musketry instruction, &c., I have been unable to detach a permanent road party, some useful occupation has invariably been found for men not otherwise engaged, and throughout the year they have performed their several duties cheerfully and well.

Several bridges have been erected with their approaches, and an important work of this nature is now in course of construction over the Urenui River. Primary difficulties have been overcome through the energy of Captain Messenger, the officer in charge of the working party, and I trust good progress will be made during the winter months.

The canteen regulations continue to work satisfactorily, and our Rifle Association has, as I anticipated, produced good results.

The gymnasiums at Wai-iti and New Plymouth are also a source of health, exercise, and recreation to the force.

In conclusion, I would state that no difficulty has existed in working with provincial authorities, from whom all members of the force have received the utmost courtesy and consideration.

I have, &c.,

ARTHUR TUKE,

Inspector, A.C., Taranaki.

The Commissioner, A.C.F., Wellington.

Enclosure 8 in No. 1.

Captain STACK to the COMMISSIONER, Armed Constabulary.

SIR,—

Armed Constabulary Depôt, Wellington, 1st July, 1872.

I have the honor herewith to forward you the "Annual Practice Return of Musketry of the Armed Constabulary," for the year ended 30th June, 1872, and with reference thereto to offer the following remarks:—

Classes Instructed.—This Return shows that 485 foot constables have been under instruction, of whom 480 have been fully exercised; besides whom forty mounted constables went through the more limited course of training prescribed for cavalry, who are not shown in this return; making a total of 520 who have gone through the musketry course during the year. In one district only, Te Wairoa, musketry instruction has not been carried out in consequence of the men being in the field on different expeditions, as explained to you in the letter of the Officer Commanding that district, dated 1st April, 1872.

I regret that it must be observed how few have been exercised at the Depôt during the past year, but this has been the result, as you are aware, of the limited strength at this station, and the fact that from frequent drafts required to be sent hence to the out-districts, drilled men have been consequently removed and their places taken by recruits. I have, therefore, been unable to form a succession of musketry classes as I would have wished to have done, for it is manifestly useless to bring men under musketry instruction till they have mastered the rudiments of drill; moreover, the strength here during the period has seldom been more than sufficient for the Barrack and Government House duties and Magazine guard.

Non-Commissioned Officers Trained as Musketry Drills.—Of the non-commissioned officers who have gone through the course of musketry at the depôt, one sergeant in each district has, under the direction of the officer commanding the district, been charged with the carrying out of the instruction of musketry, and I think they have performed this duty very creditably, judging from the returns rendered in accordance with your circular of the 1st September, 1871, No. 64, and the regulations for musketry instruction for the army.

Preliminary Drills.—All those exercised have, as directed by your circular just quoted, been trained in the preliminary drills prescribed for recruits.

Target and Judging Distance Practices.—These practices have, in accordance with circular, been executed as laid down for trained soldiers, and the result shown by the return may, I think, be considered good, the figure of merit in target practice of the whole force being 81.53, that is, a point and a half above what is given in the book of regulations as moderately good shooting for a battalion armed with the Snider Enfield rifle, to which the converted Snider medium rifle, with which the Armed Constabulary are armed, is a much inferior weapon, as I shall observe upon below in my remarks on arms, &c.

Drill and Practice Returns.—These returns have been carefully compared through every figure with the practice registers and diagrams, and very few and trifling errors have been discovered; on the whole, they may be considered very correct.

Practice Registers and Diagrams.—The records of practice appear to have been kept upon the firing ground in strict conformity with regulations.