

Ranges and Musketry Articles.—In most of the districts there are good ranges available, and the deficiency of iron targets, observed upon by me in my report last year, will, I believe, shortly be in a measure supplied; the Government having lately received a number of these articles, of such paramount importance for musketry practice.

Arms and Ammunition.—The arms and ammunition which have come under my inspection are in good order, but experience has shown me, since my last report to you was written, that the sighting of the converted Snider medium rifle, with which the force is armed, is very defective; and that, therefore, it is almost impossible to get accurate shooting with this rifle, especially at the longer ranges; and, indeed, it is obvious this must be so, the sighting not having been altered to suit the modified conditions of the weapon when shortened by conversion. The medium rifle was, I believe, constructed in accordance with the opinion which I have heard General Hay give, that the Enfield was three inches unnecessarily long for shooting, yet the converted Enfield has not as flat a trajectory as the old muzzle-loader, and therefore required alteration of sighting; much more must the medium rifle, which was never supposed to be too long, require readjustment of the sights on its conversion to the Snider principle; but there has been nothing of the kind attempted, and consequently the shooting of the weapon, as at present sighted, is uncertain in the extreme.

Firing for Armed Constabulary Prizes.—The result of the firing for prizes allotted to the Armed Constabulary by the Government, out of the money appropriated by the vote of the General Assembly for such purposes last session, is already before you in my return of the 4th May last, and shows a decided improvement in the shooting for these prizes this year as compared with last.

Colonial Prize Firing.—In conclusion, I would remark, in proof of the advantage already apparent from the establishment of a system of musketry training in the force in accordance with regulation, that whereas last year only one constable was qualified to go to the Colonial Prize Firing, there were five representatives of the Armed Constabulary this year present at the firing at Christchurch, of whom two obtained handsome prizes, and all acquitted themselves well. In addition to these, one officer, Inspector Tuke, was qualified for a Colonial representative of the Force by a very good score, but could not be spared from his command to attend the prize firing.

I have, &c.,

The Commissioner, A.C. Force, Wellington.

W. G. STACK, Captain,
Musketry Instructor, Commanding Depôt.

Enclosure 9 in No. 1.

Inspector BROHAM to the COMMISSIONER, Armed Constabulary Force.

SIR,—

Constabulary Office, Auckland, 1st June, 1872.

In compliance with Circular No. 47, of the 5th of June, 1871, I have the honor to report upon the police of this district for the last twelve months, and as the matters I shall necessarily touch upon bear no reference to most of those laid down in the circular for comment, in consequence of the constabulary being employed solely in the performance of civil duties, I trust the digression will not be considered out of order.

I attach a statistical return of the crime of the district for the year 1871. To summarise it shortly, it shows that 2,805 persons had been arrested for various offences, the most common being drunkenness, for which 1,810 persons had been taken into custody, of these 1,516 were males and 294 females; 237 persons were apprehended for vagrancy, 111 being males and 126 females, the latter being mostly prostitutes; 197 persons were charged with petty larceny, 165 being males and 32 females; there were also 842 persons summoned by the police for breaches of several Acts, generally Provincial and Municipal.

I am glad to be able to report that crime of a serious character, such as highway robbery, burglary, and such like, is almost unknown in the Province, the only approach to it being that of arson, which, I have reason to believe, is committed more frequently than is generally supposed, but being so difficult of proof, few persons have been convicted of the offence; indeed so difficult is it, that although Auckland is notorious for incendiary fires, two persons only have been convicted in the Province of the crime—one of them being Cyrus Haley, sentenced at the last Criminal Sessions to penal servitude for life for this and other offences. It was thought by many that this offender was one of a gang banded together for the commission of such deeds, but after diligent inquiries by the police, I am enabled to say that no such gang ever existed.

The only kinds of crime calling for special remark from me are vagrancy and drunkenness, and it may be safely assumed that more persons are charged with these offences in this Province than in any other in New Zealand;—discharged soldiers, old pensioners, and the dregs of the Militia regiments, are the classes which swell these lists most, and as many of them have lately become insane or have died from the continued effects of drunkenness, I look for a reduction in these returns from year to year. Unfortunately, the vices of these persons descend to their children, and most of the juvenile crime of the place is committed by them. A number of these *gamins* have been brought before the Bench from time to time for petty thefts, but owing to the absence of a reformatory, or of any suitable place in the Gaol where they could be kept apart from the ordinary criminals, they have mostly been discharged, although such a course is most certain to confirm their criminal career for life. Many children of drunken and dissolute parents have been sent by the Bench to the Industrial School, which has been most beneficial since its formation, but criminal children are not admitted; and the funds of the institution have run so short lately that no more children can be taken charge of until vacancies occur. The Bench and Press of Auckland have repeatedly dwelt on the want of a reformatory for juvenile offenders, and of a more liberal grant to the Industrial School, and I trust that the representations so made will receive the attention of the authorities. No question can be more pressing, for it is beyond doubt that children who should be sent to these institutions, if not taken care of, will largely increase the criminal population hereafter, and so become a source of greater expense to the country in the maintenance of police and gaols, and this apart from the moral aspects of the case.

An effort has lately been made to reduce the number of public houses in the Province; many of the publicans convicted of selling spirits on Sundays have had their applications for renewal of licenses