

MILITARY DUTIES.

Average Strength of Officers and Men.—One sub-inspector, 1 sergeant-major, 1 first-class sergeant, 2 second-class sergeants, 7 mounted and 24 foot constables.

Names of Stations Occupied.—Ormond, Gisborne.

Nature of Parades and Drills.—Inspection parades in marching order once a week, and Divine service parades on Sundays; inspection of saddlery and mounted men's accoutrements on Saturdays; squad, company, skirmishing drill, and rifle exercise, once a week.

The annual course of musketry was commenced on the 20th October and finished on the 12th of April. Every man in the district has passed through the course.

Conveying Mails and Despatches.—On one occasion a mounted orderly was despatched with important letters to Napier, conveying intelligence of the stoppage of the Deed of Cession Court, and on three occasions orderlies have been sent to Te Wairoa on urgent affairs.

Escorts, Guards, &c.—During the early part of the year a night-watchman was kept at Camp Ormond; but since January a guard of one non-commissioned officer and three constables have paraded nightly.

The only escorts performed by the force are those of prisoners to Auckland and Napier. There being no gaol at Poverty Bay, these escorts have been frequent, probably once a month.

Issuers and Storekeepers.—One constable of the Armed Constabulary is employed as sub-storekeeper, under the Public Stores Act, and another member of the force is employed as clerk to the Militia and Native Departments.

Erection of Redoubts and Stockades.—The parapet of the Ormond Redoubt has been rebuilt, and a slab banquetta erected. As, however, the present redoubt is unnecessarily large, I intend next summer to contract the size, and rebuild on the palisade principle.

CIVIL DUTIES.

Attending Civil Courts.—During the year there have been held 118 Resident Magistrate's Courts and the Annual Licensing Court, at which the sergeant in charge of Gisborne Station has attended to prosecute, and two constables as bailiffs, &c.

Census.—Five men of the force were employed in collecting census returns and agricultural statistics over a coast line of 120 miles, with an extreme depth of 20 miles.

Steps taken for the Prevention of Crime.—Two sergeants and 3 constables are stationed at Gisborne, and employed solely on police duties, carried out by Sergeant Shirley in the most effective manner. I attach statistical return of crime in this district for the year. While last year two-thirds of the charges were simple drunkenness, this year's return shows that crime as having fallen to one-third; but the more serious offences have doubled, viz.,—Drunkenness, 57; offences against Vagrant Act, 30; larceny, 24; malicious injury to property, 7; offences against the person, 16; false pretences, 2; embezzlement, 1; breach of the peace, 9; resisting police, 4; breach of Licensing Act, 5; receiving stolen goods, 1; fraudulent debtor, 1; minor offences, 9. This shows that, notwithstanding the very great increase of population, drunkenness has decreased; and although other crimes of a more serious nature would appear to be in excess, it is but the natural sequence of the growth of population, and the result of the law being more strictly enforced, particularly among the Native race. Under the heading "Otherwise dealt with" (146 cases), I would remark that the cause of this large number is the fact of Maoris being frequently fined for larceny and similar offences, where an European would be imprisoned. In addition to the members of the Gisborne Force, Sergeant Mills, of Ormond, is employed as rural constable, and patrols the country continually. From the extent of his knowledge of Natives and Europeans in this district, he is invaluable.

Attending Native Land Court.—During the months of August, September, and November, twenty-eight sittings of the Deed of Cession Court were held at Gisborne, the opening of which was attended by all the mounted men in the district. The station was also reinforced by three foot constables from head-quarters, and, at the request of the Judge, the officer commanding the district was present at each sitting.

PUBLIC AND USEFUL WORKS.

Nature and Extent of Road Works.—41½ chains of road, 40 feet wide, with side drains, have been formed in the neighbourhood of Ormond; earth removed, 1,650 yards; 17 chains of outlet drain, 3' x 3½', have been completed; and 16 chains 80 links of drain filled in.

Building Bridges and Culverts.—One culvert, 66 feet long, 4' x 3', of matai stringers, with split manuka covering, topped with ti-tree and earth; and one 10 feet long, 4' x 3', of the same material, have been completed. Two constables have been employed under Mr. Drummond for two months in the survey of the Mangatu and Waikohu Roads.

Building Houses, Stables, &c.—A mess-room, 36' x 12', of sawn timber and shingles, has been built at Ormond, and a stable, with hay loft, 14' x 12', of the same material, at Gisborne, to replace one burnt in the month of March. Officers' quarters at Ormond, 28' x 22', are in course of erection, and nearly completed. About 10,000 feet of timber have been sawn, and 15,000 shingles split for the above purposes, by members of the force. The whole of the station buildings have been re-painted, and one brick chimney erected.

Fencing Paddocks and Laying Down in Grass.—The paddock at Ormond, which had been ploughed, harrowed, and sown with grass seeds, has turned out a failure, in consequence of two crops of oats having been taken off the land; this had allowed the docks to seed, and so choked the young grass. Eight acres of grass were mown last summer at Waerenga-a-Hika, which produced 14 tons of excellent hay and 33 bushels of grass seed, the whole of which was saved for the use of the force.

REMARKS.

The conduct of the force has been very satisfactory. During the past year one mounted and nine foot constables have been received from the Depôt, one foot constable from the Waikato, and three men have enrolled in the district. During the same period three men have been transferred,—two to