

## Enclosure 8.

Captain STACK to the COMMISSIONER, Armed Constabulary Force.

SIR,—

Armed Constabulary Depôt, Wellington, 25th June, 1874.

I have the honor to forward you the following report upon the Armed Constabulary Depôt for the past year, in the prescribed form, together with the Annual Musketry Return of the Force.

## MILITARY DUTIES.

*Average Strength.*—The average strength of the Depôt during the year was 57 of all ranks.

*Parades and Drills.*—There have been three parades for drill of at least one hour's duration on all working days, Saturdays excepted.

*Escorts and Guards.*—The magazine guard, and picket at the Government House gate, were furnished as usual. During the stay of the Hon. the Native Minister at Otaki, while settling the Horowhenua dispute, mounted orderlies carried despatches daily between that place and Wellington; and on an occasion of the coach being stopped by floods, brought through a very heavy mail from the West Coast. Escorts were furnished from the Depôt for prisoners remanded by the Court here for trial at Auckland and Taranaki.

*Target Practice Ranges.*—The old range at the Adelaide butts having been built on, is no longer available for practice beyond 400 yards. There is a comparatively new range at Polhill's Gully, but as the Wellington Volunteers appear to have exclusive right to it, it cannot be used by the Armed Constabulary, unless by previous arrangement with the officer commanding the Volunteers, which necessarily entails delay and inconvenience when musketry practice is in progress. The only other place I know of, and believe might be available as a range for the Depôt, is the shingle bed between Evans' and Lyell's Bays, but this is distant from the barracks, and also very exposed, though I do not consider this latter point so objectionable as is often supposed, holding that the purpose of musketry training should be to teach men to shoot under all circumstances, and not merely to enable them to make a high score under the most favourable conditions. I therefore think a rifle range may be too sheltered.

## CIVIL DUTIES.

During the session of the General Assembly, three constables were placed daily at the disposal of the Hon. the Speaker of the House of Representatives, for the maintenance of order in the galleries and passages of the House. The men in training at the Depôt have lately been called upon more frequently than hitherto to exercise the functions of constables in confining persons found drunk. This arose from the great number of immigrants who arrived during the year, and who have been stationed for a time at the neighbouring Upper Mount Cook Barracks. In nearly every case of this kind in which the Armed Constabulary have acted, they have done so at the request of the custodian of the Immigrant Barracks; and these cases have been by no means numerous, considering the many new arrivals: the conduct of the immigrants after landing having been, upon the whole, quiet and orderly.

## PUBLIC AND USEFUL WORKS.

Cleaning and repairing the buildings comprised in the Armed Constabulary Depôt, and keeping the parade ground and roads through the barracks in proper order, are nearly sufficient to occupy the men during fatigue hours (three per diem), for the very worm-eaten state of the most part of the buildings renders them the more difficult to keep clean, and necessitates constant repair. The greater portion of the Government property at Mount Cook has been re-fenced during the year, and a large piece of ground made and added to the parade, and also walled in. This last work I find a most important accessory for the purpose of drill, the old parade ground having been quite too limited for the requirements of the Depôt. The exterior of nearly all the buildings has recently been re-painted.

Fatigue parties, of the average strength of twenty men, were detailed for seven days, under charge of the Depôt Sergeant-Major, to improve Polhill's Gully rifle range. They considerably enlarged the excavation for the targets and marker's butt, and formed a passable path of 4 feet wide throughout the length of the range to the 600-yards point, where, before, there had been nothing that could be properly called a track. I visited the working parties, in conjunction with the officer commanding the Volunteers, whose wishes with regard to the plan of the work were carried out, and who expressed himself well satisfied with what had been done.

Fatigue parties have been frequently furnished to the various departments of the public service, when required.

Telegraphic communication between the Lunatic Asylum and the Barracks has been established, so that assistance may be at once rendered, if needed.

## ANNUAL MUSKETRY PRACTICE.

*Annual Musketry Practice Return.*—The annual course of musketry has been carried out in accordance with the new system promulgated for Her Majesty's Army, in the General Order dated Horse Guards, 1st March, 1872; it is, therefore, impossible to institute a comparison between the figures of merit of the force this year and last, and no authoritative record has as yet reached me, showing what the standard of merit for Her Majesty's Army now is, if indeed this has been fixed under the new system. The advantages of the change are very apparent, the chief of which are, I think, that every man fires now kneeling as well as standing, and at distances up to 600 yards; whereas, under the old system, if a man did not get out of the third class, he never fired kneeling in class firing, nor at any greater distance than 300 yards. Some men—though not many—improve in shooting comparatively as they get away from the target, and many can shoot well kneeling who cannot do so standing.