

The percentage of marksmen in the force is nearly the same as it was last year, which was good under the old system of scoring.

Drill and Practice Returns.—These returns appear to have been carefully, and, upon the whole, correctly kept in the various districts; and the more care was necessary, as the printed forms are not exactly suited to the change made in the mode of classification, and the alterations in the system had to be conveyed to officers commanding districts entirely by your circular memoranda.

Firing for Armed Constabulary Prizes.—As with regard to the figure of merit, so with regard to the firing under this head, a comparison cannot be drawn with results in former years, it having been decided that the sum (£150) apportioned by the Government for Armed Constabulary prizes this year, out of the amount voted by the House of Representatives for prize shooting, should be allotted to marksmen in class firing, under the terms laid down in your Circular Memorandum No. 134, dated 17th October, 1873, instead of, as hitherto, in a few larger prizes to the highest scorers in a distinct competition for the purpose. I enclose an extract from the Annual Musketry Return, showing the distribution of prizes in accordance with that circular. I believe that this alteration has given an additional incentive to the mass of the men to excel in their class firing, and therefore, to be generally beneficial to the force; but I beg to suggest that reports from officer's commanding districts on the subject might be useful to you in framing regulations for a future occasion of the kind.

I must here notice that no return of the competitive practice of the mounted men in the Taranaki district has been received, although the district return showed five men qualified to compete for Armed Constabulary prizes.

Colonial Prize Firing.—Forty-two members of the force qualified for the Colonial Prize Firing this year, being twenty-five over the number qualified last year; and eleven prizes were carried off by the Armed Constabulary at the Colonial Prize Firing as against six in 1873.

ARMS, &c.

The arms, accoutrements, and ammunition which have come under my inspection, were serviceable and in proper order.

Remarks.—The physical condition of the non-commissioned officers and men at the Depôt, during the past twelve months, has been as formerly, very good, their health having been unbroken by any illness of a serious nature.

The conduct of all ranks has been generally excellent, and in this remark I desire especially to include the two detachments of the Native Contingent that have been stationed here for training. The first detachment, consisting of 1 officer, 1 sergeant, and 20 men, arrived in January last, and remained for four months; the progress which they made in drill during the time was considerable, notwithstanding the difficulty which necessarily arose from their want of knowledge of the language spoken by their instructors. This detachment went through the course of musketry, and their firing was very creditable. The second detachment (1 officer, 1 sergeant, and 21 men) have only been here since the 7th instant, and from the commencement they have made in drill, I anticipate the best result, if they are here sufficiently long.

In conclusion, I would state that in addition to the detachment of Native Contingent, four drafts, averaging 24 of all ranks, were sent hence to the Waikato and East Coast districts during the year.

I have, &c.,
W. G. STACK, Captain,
Instructor of Musketry, Commanding Depôt.

The Commissioner,
Armed Constabulary Force, Wellington.

Sub-Enclosure to Enclosure No. 8.

EXTRACT from the ANNUAL RETURN of MUSKETRY PRACTICE of the ARMED CONSTABULARY FORCE for 1874, showing the Distribution of Prizes for the Year.

MOUNTED.

Registered No.	Rank and Name.	District.	No. of Points in Competitive Practice.	No. of Prize.	Amount.	Remarks.
326	Constable J. Steele ...	Waikato ...	30	1st	£ 6	Prizes, £20.
1726	" T. P. Gilpin ...	Patea ...	25	2nd	2	
1583	" J. Hinton ...	Waikato ...	24	3rd	2	
1664	" E. George ...	Waikato ...	23	4th	2	
1684	" B. Reed ...	Wairoa ...	21	5th	2	54 in 1st Period.
1962	" P. Connell ...	Waikato ...	21	6th	2	51 in "
1033	" A. Craigg ...	Taupo ...	21	7th	2	46 in "
1807	" P. Galbraith ...	Poverty Bay ...	20	8th	2	