

1884.

NEW ZEALAND.

NEW ZEALAND CONSTABULARY

(ANNUAL REPORT ON).

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

Lieut.-Colonel READER to the Hon. the DEFENCE MINISTER.

SIR,—

Commissioner's Office, Wellington, 31st May, 1884.

I have the honour to submit to you a report, with statistics attached, of the Constabulary force for the year ending the 31st March, 1884.

2. The Police branch shows a strength on the 31st March of 465, being an increase of four on the previous year; the Field force 492, a decrease of 142 on the previous year. The distribution of both branches is shown in attached returns.

3. In the above strength of the Police are not included 26 Native constables, at reduced salaries, ranging from £20 to £100 per annum.

4. The casualties in the Police branch amount to 44, as against 59 of the previous year, made up as follows: Resignations 32, discharges 10 (three of which were on compensation, and one for medical unfitness), dismissals 2.

5. By the criminal statistics attached, an increase of minor offences in the North Island, to the extent of 406, is shown; and a decrease in the South Island of 244.

6. The statistics of drunkenness for past year show an increase in Canterbury of 211 cases, in Otago of 204, in Wellington of 165, in Auckland of 112, in Nelson of 30, and in Westland of 6; and a decrease of 31 in Hawke's Bay, and 29 in Taranaki.

7. I have given below, for your information, a return showing the proportion of police to population, and cost per inhabitant of this and adjoining colonies, showing the comparison favourable to New Zealand.

8. I am happy to be able to report most favourably of the general good conduct of the members of the force, and the zeal and energy displayed by both officers and men in the discharge of their multifarious duties outside actual police work, in connection with enforcing the by-laws of local bodies, as enumerated in former reports.

9. With respect to the Field force, in consequence of the harbour beacons erected by Captain Fairchild, of the "Hinemoa," having been destroyed by the Natives, a detachment of Constabulary, consisting of three officers and 111 men, under command of Major Tuke, with camp equipage complete, and provisions for two months, was despatched in the "Hinemoa" to Kawhia, in the early part of October last, to establish a Constabulary post on the north shore of the harbour, for the protection of the new beacons to be erected by Captain Fairchild, in lieu of those that had been destroyed. I visited the post shortly after in the "Hinemoa," taking with me, under your instructions, two troop horses, with a view of establishing a regular communication with Alexandra, and the materials for a small blockhouse, to enable a few men to protect the camp, should the main body be required for service outside of it. I found the camp pitched on an elevation, selected by you, commanding the Government reserve of 44 acres, where our landing had to be effected. Nothing could have been more friendly than the understanding which appeared to exist between the Natives and our men, notably on the part of the chief Hone te One, who, I found, had not only sent supplies to the camp, but had made over to Major Tuke a piece of cultivated ground, well fenced, as a kitchen-garden for the men, and also a fenced paddock of some forty acres for the run of any horses we might require. Major Tuke, and the officers under him, deserve great credit for the arrangements they had already made for the comfort of their men. On my return to Wellington I was authorized by you to forward materials for the erection of a reading-room for the use of the men, a supply of books from the Constabulary library, and garden seeds; and this was accordingly done by the next trip of the "Hinemoa." The materials for a six-roomed house for the accommodation of the commanding officer, and to assist his subaltern officers in the erection of their huts, were forwarded shortly afterwards. The necessary carpenters' work was done by members of the force brought up to the trade. In the course of the general reduction of the Constabulary in the quarter ending the 31st March, the strength of the Kawhia detachment was reduced from 114 of all ranks to seventy-nine. On leaving Kawhia I proceeded to New Plymouth by the "Hinemoa," and from there overland through Lieut.-Colonel Roberts's district, that officer meeting me at Pungarehu, now reduced to a post of twenty men, who occupy the blockhouse which was erected