

## MUSKETRY.

*Annual Musketry Practice Return.*—The Annual Musketry Return of the Force shows an improvement of 1·58 points in the figure of merit of this year over last, and an increase of 4·90 points in the percentage of marksmen. The percentage of marksmen is very good, but the figure of merit has not yet reached that standard; however, it is to be remembered that the members of the Force this year fired with a weapon entirely new to them, the short Snider, and of which I said, in my report to the Acting Commissioner last year, that, while I believed it superior to the medium rifle for general service in New Zealand, I did not anticipate that it would be found superior, if even equal, to the old weapon on the practice range.

*Drill and Practice Returns.*—These returns appear to have been kept in accordance with regulations. In the returns received from two of the districts, there were points which I thought required explanation, and these I have brought under your notice in my letter No. 16, of the 16th of May last.

*Armed Constabulary Prizes.*—It was directed by a circular memorandum from the Acting Commissioner, No. 172, of the 22nd of October last, that the money allotted by the Government to the Armed Constabulary out of the sum voted by the House of Representatives for prizes for rifle shooting should be distributed in the same manner as in the three preceding years; I therefore, on the 16th ultimo, forwarded you an extract from the Annual Musketry Return, showing the distribution of the prizes for the year, which only reached 54 out of 83 who were qualified for those rewards by their shooting.

*Colonial Prize Firing.*—In this firing the Armed Constabulary were not so successful as last year. Of the foot portion of the Force, only six qualified, and only the three Government representatives attended the meeting. Of the mounted men, five qualified and three went to the firing at their own expense, besides the one Government representative.

## ARMS, ETC.

The arms, accoutrements, ammunition, &c., which I have inspected were serviceable and in good order. The new material now being issued for clothing will, I feel sure, give general satisfaction, and, with the new cap approved of by the Hon. the Native Minister, will very greatly improve the appearance of the Force.

## REMARKS.

I observe that a general order was issued in March last, considerably altering the regulations for target practice in the annual course of musketry in the army. I trust that during the year they may be introduced into the training of the Armed Constabulary. They are not numerous though important, and tend rather to simplify and shorten the course of instruction than otherwise: one modification being, that men are to fire at only two distances in each period; at 200 yards, standing; at 300 yards, kneeling; and at all other distances, in any position. In future there are to be prizes given for judging distance, and a man's failure in this practice will no longer disqualify him for a reward as marksman. These alterations will, I think, appear to those who study the subject to be improvements on the old system.

It gives me much pleasure to be able to render the same report as in past years of the generally excellent conduct of the non-commissioned officers and constables who have been placed under my command, and also that the health of the members of the Force at the depôt has been exempt from any attack of disease of a dangerous nature, and from serious accident.

I have, &c.,

W. G. STACK, Captain,

Instructor of Musketry, Commanding Armed Constabulary Depôt.

The Commissioner Armed Constabulary Force, Wellington.

## Enclosure 11 in No. 1.

Inspector GORING, Opotiki District, to the COMMISSIONER, Armed Constabulary Force.

SIR,—

Armed Constabulary, Opotiki, 31st May, 1876.

In compliance with instructions contained in Circular No. 181, dated April 25th, 1876, I have the honor to forward, for your information, the following duties performed by the Armed Constabulary from 1st June 1875, to 31st May, 1876:—

*Average Strength of Officers and Men.*—The average strength of the Armed Constabulary in the Opotiki District from the 1st of June, 1875, to 31st May, 1876—1 inspector, 2 sub-inspectors, 1 sergeant-major, 2 first-class sergeants, 4 second-class sergeants, 8 mounted constables, and 56 foot; total all ranks, 74.

*Nature of Parades and Drill.*—Inspection parades and drills in marching order once a week, Divine service on Sundays, weekly inspection of mounted men, saddlery, and horse appointments, by officers and non-commissioned officers in charge of stations, and monthly inspection by officer commanding district. The annual course of musketry instruction was commenced on the 31st of November, 1875, and finished January 5th, 1876. The shooting on the whole was fair, two constables qualifying as marksmen.

*Conveying Mails and Despatches.*—A mounted orderly leaves Opotiki for Whakatane with the public mail every Monday; on his arrival at Whakatane he hands the mail over to the orderly belonging to that station, who proceeds with it to Matata, where he is relieved by one of the mounted men belonging to the Tauranga District. He returns to Whakatane next day, and hands the mail over to the Opotiki orderly. Te Teko: An orderly leaves this post for Matata every Monday with the mail, and waits there until the arrival of the Tauranga mail on Tuesday. An orderly leaves Galatea for Te Teko, and waits the arrival of the mail from Matata, when he returns to his station. Since the Armed Constabulary have been employed on the Ormond and Opotiki Road, an orderly goes to the camp once a week with the mail.

*Escorts and Guards.*—No escorts except conducting prisoners to Auckland and Tauranga Gaols, when sentenced to imprisonment or committed for trial, have been performed in this district during the past year.