

SESS. II.—1879.
NEW ZEALAND.

NEW ZEALAND CONSTABULARY

(ANNUAL REPORTS ON).

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

No. 1.

The Hon. Colonel WHITMORE to His Excellency the GOVERNOR.

New Zealand Constabulary Commissioner's Office,
Wellington, 24th July, 1879.

SIR,—

I have to forward herewith, for your Excellency's information, the enclosed reports from the Inspecting Superintendents of the Police Branch of the Armed Constabulary in each Island.

In connection with these reports, I have to inform your Excellency that the recommendations of the Parliamentary Committee which sat last year have been carried out, and many of the officers and subordinate members of the force have been removed from one station to another throughout both Islands.

The detective branch of the force has been increased in numbers, and its efficiency is improved. A Bill has been prepared for creating a pension fund for the force by deductions from the pay of the members, aided by a Government grant: the pay of the force was temporarily increased last year on the understanding that the Government would undertake this step. Should the present proposal be carried into effect, good men will obtain an advantage and encouragement which must exercise a beneficial effect upon the force.

The requirements of the increasing population of the colony render some addition both to the numbers and accommodation of the force absolutely essential; but the proportion of police to the population here compares favourably with that of other colonies and countries.

The course adopted during the last two years of confining the employment of the police to those duties properly belonging to the force until now enabled the Superintendents to avoid a larger augmentation than the very limited one of last year, but it is now found necessary to propose a further increase to the numbers for the consideration of Parliament.

I have pleasure in reporting to your Excellency that the officers and members of the force have, during the past year, conducted themselves with great propriety and intelligence, and have manifested much promptitude and zeal on several remarkable occasions.

The Inspecting Superintendents have been unremitting in their efforts to keep up a high standard of character in the force.

The Armed Constabulary (Reserve Branch) has, owing to the state of things on the West Coast, been very largely increased during the current year. Great care and attention have been bestowed upon the selection of candidates for admission, and it has been thought right to enrol a proportion of men who, though beyond the regulation age, have already acquired some experience in active field service in the colony.

As it is hoped that the necessity for maintaining so large a force will be but temporary, several of the officers appointed have been informed that their services will not necessarily be continued, in the event of a reduction taking place.

I cannot give too much praise to the officers and Drill Instructors of the dépôt for the manner in which the equipment and training of the force has been carried out; and I may add that Lieut.-Colonel Lyon, in Waikato, has also given material assistance in the same direction.

The Armed Constabulary Reserve Force at present consists of 870 men of all ranks, of which number 600 are on the West Coast, and 100 in Wellington. All are armed with short Sniders, and fully equipped for active service. At all the principal stations large reserves of ammunition and stores are collected, and the officers serving with the force have already acquired great experience in the field.

Lieut.-Colonel Roberts, N.Z.C., is in command of the main force on the West Coast, and Lieut.-Colonel Lyon remains in command of the Waikato Frontier District.

While expressing a strong hope that peace may be preserved, still I desire to assure your Excellency that the colony may firmly rely on the efficiency of the force now assembled on the West Coast should any outbreak occur.

I have, &c.

His Excellency Sir Hercules George Robert Robinson, G.C.M.G.

G. S. WHITMORE.