

1873.

## NEW ZEALAND.

## ARMED CONSTABULARY FORCE.

(ANNUAL REPORT OF COMMISSIONER.)

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

The COMMISSIONER, Armed Constabulary Force, to the Hon. the NATIVE MINISTER.

Armed Constabulary.

SIR,—

Commissioner's Office, Wellington, 14th July, 1873.

In accordance with clause No. 159 of the Armed Constabulary Regulations, I have the honor to report on the state of the Force, as to number of men, their distribution and efficiency, for the year ending 30th June, 1873.

At the commencement of the last financial year, the Force consisted of 724 of all ranks. During the year, there has been an increase of 138, as shown in Table No. 2, and a decrease of 158 as per Table No. 3, leaving the strength at the close of the year 704. These are distributed as appears in Table No. 4.

In this my third Annual Report, it gives me much pleasure to be again able to inform you that a marked improvement in the efficiency of the Armed Constabulary during the past year is apparent. The health of the men has been very good, and their conduct generally exemplary. The officers have been zealous in carrying out my orders, and the non-commissioned officers and constables have been active and diligent in the discharge of their several duties.

The arms, accoutrements, and equipment, the condition of the horses, and the general appearance of the posts, are satisfactory.

With reference to Table No. 3, it is observable that the number of men who have taken their discharge voluntarily during the year has not been so great as last year, but still the total is very considerable. I have in my previous annual reports, called attention to the only apparent remedy for this—namely, a more lengthened term of service. So long as men are not compelled by the terms of their enrolment, there are few who will be found to endure the monotony and isolation of such posts as those in the Taupo and Wairoa country for more than twelve months, which is the present period of engagement.

Enclosed are reports from Officers Commanding Districts, showing a very large amount of public and useful works executed during the past year by the Armed Constabulary, for which great credit is due to the officers and men, and more particularly to those in the Taranaki District, for the energy and ability displayed in the erection and completion of a substantial bridge over the Urenui River, a detailed account of which will be found in Inspector Tuke's report. The bridge comprises eleven spans, is 224 feet long, and contains over 45,000 feet of the best timber, cut in the bush by members of the Armed Constabulary.

On my recent visit to the Waikato District, I found three new posts had been established. The redoubts were strongly built on sites well chosen for defence, and commanding the ground between, as also the approaches from, the King country. The chain of posts on the frontier, together with a regular system of connected patrols along the confiscated boundary line, seems to have given confidence to the settlers, all of whom have remained on their farms, and, from inquiries made, they were in no way alarmed or uneasy.

The report of Inspector Broham, in charge of the Auckland Police District, is deserving of serious consideration. It is manifest that the number of men provided for by the Provincial authorities is utterly inadequate for the proper discharge of the important duties required of them; and considering the large population and extent of country over which their operations extend, the success which has hitherto attended their exertions is creditable alike to officers and men.

In the Estimates of the Armed Constabulary, recently submitted, the sum set down for the maintenance of the Auckland District for the year 1873-74, viz. £6,630 15s., is the amount voted by the Provincial Council for this service for the year 1873, the periods for which provision is made by the Provincial and General Governments not being concurrent; but I would earnestly recommend that the Inspector's estimate may be acted upon, and that the Provincial authorities be urged to provide for the increased expenditure involved, which only amounts to about £860.

With regard to the crime of "specimen stealing," to which allusion is made, I have to observe that as the powers under "The Quartz Crushing Machines Regulation and Inspection Act, 1872," have been recently delegated to His Honor the Superintendent of Auckland, there is no reason to doubt that its provisions will be enforced without unnecessary delay, and that additional facilities for the suppression of this offence will be afforded thereby.