

Taking Census, &c.—The agricultural statistics of the Province have been collected by members of the force.

PUBLIC AND USEFUL WORKS.

Nature and Extent of Road Works.—About 27 chains of road, 20 feet wide, has been formed on the south approach to the camp at Pukearuhe. In its construction about 1,000 cubic yards of earth were removed.

Seven chains of cutting have been repaired on the road between Wai-iti and Pukearuhe, and a bridle-track of about 16 chains cleared and formed, to facilitate communication between the two stations.

About one chain of road has been repaired between the Papatiki Stream and Native settlement at Wai-iti, and the bridge over that stream and its approaches have been put in order.

A track of about 1,000 yards has been cut, leading from the stream below the Pukearuhe redoubts to the top of a leading spur on the nearest range, intersecting old Native tracks, and about 150 yards of steps cut to the stream from the redoubt.

Building Bridges and Culverts.—A substantial bridge has been built by order of the Hon. the Defence Minister over the Urenui River. This bridge is 224 feet long, with a roadway of 12 feet, and stands 6 feet above the highest freshets or spring tides. Over 45,000 feet of the best procurable timber, as puriri, matai, and rimu, sawn by members of the Armed Constabulary, were used in its construction. The piles, 10 inches square, and of great length, are driven some distance into the bed rock; in fact, the original lengths were found too short, for a 24-foot pile was driven to low watermark on the east bank before the rock was penetrated. The bridge comprises eleven spans, eight of 15 feet and three of 20 feet, the latter spanning the centre or deepest part of the river. In procuring suitable timber, great difficulty was experienced, necessitating over twenty pits and the construction of 327 chains of road, of which 110 chains were through bush, and the remainder through swamp and fern. In addition, 17½ chains of side-cutting were necessary, and 4 chains of raupo swamp were bridged over with fern and earth. The western approach necessitated the removal of 3,750 yards of earth, and on the eastern side of the bridge the road has been considerably repaired. This bridge has for some time been open for traffic.

Building Houses, Stables, &c.—A strong redoubt has been built at Pukearuhe, with flanking towers and raised bastions, commanding the interior. In its construction about 2,630 yards of earth were removed, and large quantities of fern and sods cut and carried to the site of the redoubt.

A barrack room containing about 23,000 feet of timber has been built in New Plymouth by members of the force, and awaits transport to the front.

Twenty-three whares up to the present time have been built at the front, in most instances with Native assistance.

An officers' mess-house, a whare used as a reading-room, a canteen, and storeroom, have been built.

A large mess-whare and reading-room, and new cook-houses, &c., are now in course of erection. 3,500 feet of timber, sawn by members of the force at Pukearuhe, were used for different purposes of this nature.

At Wai-iti a five-stall bush stable was built during the year.

Also, at the same station, a whare 24 × 18 feet has been built for the accommodation of the men. The barracks at Marsland Hill, and quarters at Mount Elliot, and grounds, have been kept in thorough repair during the year.

Fencing Paddocks and Laying Down in Grass.—At Wai-iti, eight chains of ditch and bank fencing between that station and the Native settlement were repaired, but owing to the removal of camp not proceeded with.

In addition, the necessary repairs to all fencing in the district have been performed, and the paddocks kept in order, cleared of docks, &c.

Erecting and Repairing Telegraph Lines, and Building Sea Walls.—No works of this nature have been carried on during the year by any members of the force in this district.

REMARKS.

I have the honor to report favourably on the state of this district for the past year. Since my last report, eight men have been discharged at their own request; one dismissed the service for misconduct; and three transferred for duty to other districts. In addition to these, a party consisting of one officer, two sergeants, and twenty-eight men have been transferred for duty to Waikato.

During the past year, as many men as could possibly be spared from garrison duties have been employed on public and useful works; and owing to the removal of the camp from Wai-iti to Pukearuhe, the erection of new earthworks at that place, and the numerous buildings and fatigues incidental on the change of a permanent camp, the whole of the dismounted portion of the force has been busily employed for the last twelve months.

Equally important with the erection of these necessary works, under the immediate supervision of Sub-Inspectors Goring and Rowan, has been the bridge built under the direction of Captain Messenger and his detachment of Armed Constabulary. To this officer and his party great credit is due for the energy and ability they displayed in that important work.

It will be readily understood by the Commissioner that such works as these must to a considerable extent interfere with drill, as it would be most inconvenient to take the men from their present employment, and mass them for that purpose. No opportunity has, however, been lost to make the force acquainted with its military duties; and the public benefit derived from such work as the bridge above alluded to will compensate in a very great degree for any slight deficiency in that respect.

The Commissioner, in a former report, has alluded to the desirability of enlisting men for a longer service than twelve months. This year, the subject has been prominently brought under my notice; and I am of opinion that were men enlisted for a longer period, and, in consequence, likely to be longer