

Escorts and Guards.—At Ormond and Te Awanui, only a night-watch of one constable is kept, the whole available Force being employed on the roads. No escorts have been performed by the Force of a military nature.

Issuers and Storekeepers.—One constable of the Armed Constabulary Force is employed at Gisborne as sub-storekeeper under the Public Stores Act; another is employed as clerk to the Militia and Land Purchase Departments. A constable is also employed occasionally in cleaning the Ngatiporou reserve of 100 Sniders at Te Awanui.

CIVIL DUTIES.

Attending Civil Courts.—During the year, about eighty sittings of the Resident Magistrate's Court and four of the Quarterly Licensing Court have been held, and at each Court the sergeant in charge of Gisborne Station and two constables have attended.

Collecting Agricultural Statistics.—From the 15th of February to the 2nd March, one constable was engaged in collecting the returns over a coast line of 130 miles from Waiapu to Te Mahia.

Steps taken for the Prevention of Crime.—1 sergeant, 1 mounted and 2 foot constables are employed at Gisborne Station in police duties. About 160 cases of a more or less serious character have passed through their hands. The more serious crimes are slightly on the increase.

Attending Native Lands Court.—The Native Lands Court opened at Gisborne on the 17th June. Sergeant Armstrong and a constable attended the Court throughout the sitting. The Court was closed on the 1st September.

The Court opened again on the 23rd February, and was attended by a constable until the 2nd March. The behaviour of the Natives was excellent throughout.

The Court opened at Waiapu early in April, and as disturbances were expected from a turbulent section of Ngatiporou, headed by the chief Wi Keiha, I ordered Sergeant Armstrong, in charge of Te Awanui, to withdraw the men from road work, and place the whole of his available force (33 men), at the disposal of Captain Porter, District Officer; fortunately the Natives behaved quietly, and their services were not urgently required.

Escorts for Prisoners.—On four occasions constables have been sent to Auckland with prisoners, and on one occasion to Napier.

PUBLIC AND USEFUL WORKS.

Extent and Nature of Road Works.—Work was commenced by the Force in this district in December, when 8 men were employed on the Motu line.

In December, 14½ chains of road-side cuttings under the Waikohu Cliff were excavated, 448 cubic yards of clay, and 143 of rock removed; value of work, £27 10s. 6d. In January, slips on the previous month's work were removed, and 16 chains of side cuttings made; but this work was not measured or valued, it having been swept completely away by the high flood which visited the district during the latter part of January.

In February, 1 sergeant and 18 men were employed on the Mangatu and Ormond line, and completed 20 chains of side and block cuttings, 1,203 cubic yards of sidings, and 102½ of block cuttings were removed. Value of work, £50 4s. 3d.

In March, 1 sergeant and 18 men were employed, and built one bridge, 20 x 13, and one, 16 x 13, and formed 20 chains of road through the forest, 10 feet wide. Four men were also employed in surveying for eight days. Value of work, £75 12s.

In April, 1 sergeant and 18 men were employed on the Ormond and Gisborne main road, repairing damage done by the flood: 1,779 feet of drains dug, containing 1,021 cubic yards of earth, and the centre of the roadway for 955 feet raised by wheeling 283 cubic yards of earth upon it. Sixteen men were also employed for two days in clearing the Muhunga Creek of logs to increase the drainage. Work not valued to date.

Building Houses, &c.—Since writing my last report, a comfortable station has been built at Te Awanui by the constables of the Force; one barrack-room, 30 x 10; non-commissioned officers' quarters, 20 x 10; and a cook-house, 10 x 10. A lock-up has also been built of strong slabs at Ormond containing two cells, each 8 x 6.

The old block-house at Gisborne Station, having proved inadequate for the requirements of the Force, has been sold by public auction, and new buildings erected by members of the Force, as follows:—Office, 10 x 12; barrack-room, 22 x 12; two cells, each 8 x 6. The cook-house and two cells originally built have been moved to the new site, and form sufficient gaol accommodation for some years to come. A square round these buildings has been palisaded with strong timber, cut in the Ormond bush and carted to town by the Government drays. The enclosure is 40 x 50, and 7 feet high.

Fencing Paddocks and laying down in Grass.—The Government paddock at Ormond has been enlarged by 10 chains of extra fencing, and 3 acres of it cleared and ploughed and laid down in good grass. The home paddock round the camp reserve at Ormond was completely buried in mud 3 feet deep during the high flood of January, 1876; 7 chains of fencing had therefore to be dug out and re-erected. Eight acres of grass were cut for hay during the month of December, and stacked at Ormond: it was completely destroyed by the flood.

REMARKS.

The conduct of the Force has been very satisfactory.

One dray and an ambulance waggon are employed occasionally in carting oats, firewood, for the Gisborne lock-up and palisades: they are driven by a mounted constable of the Force.

During the month of April the district was visited by the Marquis of Normanby and suite.

A dispute, which at one time assumed serious proportions, arose during March between a section of Ngatiporou and a settler at Te Awanui. The Natives seized some of his cattle and sold them by auction, to satisfy a claim for rent which they alleged was due them. Their behaviour when summoned before the Resident Magistrate's Court at Waiapu was most bouncable, and they openly stated that they would shoot any one attempting to arrest them, but by the able management of Captain Porter (Native Agent) the affair was settled and the cattle returned.