

In addition to the annual course of musketry instruction, which was held at Waihi during the months of November and December, the detachments have been frequently exercised in light infantry and the new skirmishing drill. During the month of September, the mounted constables were put through a course of drill. Special parades have been held at Opunake, Patea, and Waihi once a month, for the purpose of inspecting arms, accoutrements, and saddlery.

Patrolling and Scouting.—Little or no duty of this nature has been performed; communication by means of mounted orderlies between the various stations has at times been required.

Carriage of Mails and Despatches.—Waihi furnishes an orderly for the conveyance of outgoing mails between that station, Normanby, and Hawera, three times every week. The constable stationed at Hawera is also employed tri-weekly in carrying mails to Waihi and Normanby.

Cobb and Co.'s coach carries a mail tri-weekly between Whanganui and Hawera, and bi-weekly between Hawera and Opunake.

Mounted Escorts, Guards, &c.—2 mounted constables, furnished from Waihi, attended as orderlies at the Colonial Prize Firing, held at Whanganui in March; and 1 non-commissioned officer, and 10 constables were employed on the same occasion as a fatigue party.

Civil prisoners committed for trial at Whanganui or New Plymouth have been escorted thither by foot constables; and numerous arrests have been made which required escorts from out-stations to Patea.

Up to the 16th May, 2 constables mounted guard daily at Waihi, but owing to the reduced strength of that station, the number has been since altered to 1; and for the same reason, 2 constables only mount guard daily at Opunake instead of 1 non-commissioned officer and 3 constables, as formerly.

At the out-stations, the duties of the constables partake more of the nature of police supervision than guards; but one constable constantly remains about the barracks.

Making and Improving Target Ranges.—The rifle range at Waihi has been kept in good order, and new butts have been erected thereon; and at Opunake a short range was cleared, but no further improvement was made, as, by direction of the Government, the Force at that station was not permitted to be exercised in musketry.

Issuer and Storekeeper.—One constable has been employed as sub-storekeeper throughout the year.

Erection of Redoubts, &c.—The palisade and block-houses at Waihi have been kept in thorough repair, but there has been no necessity for the erection of any new defensive works.

CIVIL DUTIES.

Steps taken for Prevention of Crime.—One foot sergeant and 1 foot constable have been employed throughout the year on police duty in the Township of Carlyle.

At Ketemarae, Hawera, Manutahi, Wairoa, and Waitotara, a constable is detailed daily for police duty. Cases of crime in the district numbered 41 arrests, and of these 4 were sent for trial.

The constables stationed at Hawera are frequently employed in serving summonses, 126 being served by them during the year.

The sittings of the Resident Magistrate's Court at Patea and Hawera are attended by constables of the Force.

Collecting Agricultural Statistics.—The following members of the Force were employed in the Taranaki Province on this duty:—Sergeant Hurrell, from southern boundary of the province to the Manawapo, and Constable Weatherly, from the Manawapo to the Waingongoro Rivers. In the Wellington Province, Constable Burrow was employed collecting agricultural statistics between the northern boundary of the province and the Waitotara River.

PUBLIC AND USEFUL WORKS.

Nature and Extent of Road Work.—One foot sergeant and 8 foot constables have been employed on road work between Patea and Oeo since the beginning of March, 1876; and Opunake Station has, since the 21st February, supplied a party of 5 constables daily for road work between Umuroa and Ponehu. The latter party has, during that period, cleared 255 chains 69 links, more or less, of main drains; 58 chains 27 links water tables; and 255 chains of flax and scrub. They have also kept in repair the approaches to the bridges between the before-mentioned places.

The party between Oeo and Patea has been employed in keeping in repair the existing road between those places, stretching over 47 miles. They are shifted about as occasion requires by direction of an overseer holding office under Mr. O. Carrington, Engineer in charge of West Coast.

Building Bridges and Culverts.—With the exception of a small culvert, 14 by 12, built at Waihi, no new structures of this nature have been erected.

Two constables from the road party were employed a considerable time in effecting certain necessary repairs to the bridges over the Patea and Whenuakura Rivers.

The bridges over the Tongahoe and Manawapo have been attended to by the road party.

Building Houses and Stables.—Officers' quarters, 27 by 22, with double brick chimney and verandah, have been erected at Waihi. 5,000 feet of timber and 9,000 shingles were required for these quarters, the whole of the material being supplied by Constabulary labour.

At Opunake, the magazine, an iron building, 14 by 12, was removed from Opunake to Te Namu, the proper Constabulary camp, and re-erected in the Government paddock, and a small whare has been built for use as a guard-room.

In my last report I alluded to the half-finished state of the stables at Waihi. I have since then had that portion already built removed from the bank of the creek to a more convenient spot in the paddock behind the redoubt.

Fencing Paddocks and laying down Grass.—At Waihi, 5 chains of new post-and-rail fencing have been put up and 20 chains repaired, the whole requiring 100 rails and 50 posts, which were split by the men at that station.

At the same station 7 acres were mown, and yielded 12 tons of good hay.

At Opunake, the total amount of fencing material supplied by the Force at that station amounted to 1,000 rails and 250 posts, and this quantity had to be carried out of the bush a considerable distance by the men, to be erected thence about 2½ miles to camp.