

Discharge of Duties.—The comparative absence of complaints, and the good feeling which exists between the public and the police, show that their duties must have been performed with consideration for the feelings of those with whom they came into unpleasant contact, and with that degree of efficiency to insure the confidence and respect of those in authority.

City Police.—The duties of the men thus employed have been performed in a manner creditable to all grades; and I hope, when regulations are framed for their guidance, there will be more uniformity of system at each of the principal centres of population.

Clothing.—During the ensuing year I hope to have complete uniformity in the uniforms and material worn by the police in this Island.

Appointments.—With few exceptions the Force is well provided, and the appointments accord with the uniform pattern; but in many instances those adapted for the foot division of the Force are in the possession of men who require the use of horses to enable them to perform their duties.

Barracks, Stables, and other Buildings.—With few exceptions the police are poorly housed; in some places where members of the Force are stationed buildings have not been provided, and in others are limited to a small cell or two with a room attached; but as I have already brought this subject under your notice when forwarding the proposed estimates for the next financial period, and made provision for requirements of this nature, it will be needless to enter further into the subject here, beyond expressing a hope that prompt measures will be taken to provide the Wellington police with suitable accommodation.

Horses.—Those I have had an opportunity of seeing are in good condition, and appear to have been well selected, except one at Hawera, which is better adapted for harness. Where there are no stables available it is necessary covers should be provided and worn during the winter months.

Forage.—This is usually a heavy item. Where the necessities of the country require the members of the Force to be mounted, economy could be exercised for the future if paddocks were secured, and, where forage is indispensable, if it were purchased immediately after harvest.

Distribution.—In some places where foot police are stationed the duties require that mounted constables should be employed. Through the absence of means of moving about and making themselves acquainted with their districts, offences are committed which might otherwise be prevented; from the same cause there are others that never come to light: consequently offenders remain at large, and become more daring. The full particulars can be seen on referring to the attached return.

Statistics of Crime.—Provision has been recently made for their collection. A return showing the number of offences reported, persons apprehended, and a comparison of crime during the years ending December, 1876 and 1877, accompanies this report. In 1876 it will be observed that 5,157 offences were reported, 5,011 persons arrested, leaving 146 undetected; but as the records of undetected crime were not available in every instance this is not to be accepted as correct.

Patrols.—In most districts, as a rule, the police belong to the foot division of the Force, and, when compelled to travel any distance from their respective stations, have to hire horses. It would be most expensive to adopt this course in every ordinary instance; therefore, in populous and scattered districts, it would not only tend towards economy to supplement the usefulness of the men by means of horses, but would enable them to take more active steps to prevent crime. I therefore beg to recommend an increase of the number of horses on the strength of the Force.

Boundaries of Districts.—The present arrangements appear to answer, with the exception of Auckland, which extends over 400 miles in a direct line. This district is too large to enable the department to comply in every instance with the provisions of the Public Revenues Act in forwarding accounts in sufficient time, nor can it receive that amount of supervision necessary for police purposes, to insure the efficient working of the district. I would recommend that the southern portion be placed under the separate charge of an experienced police officer.

Payments.—To facilitate the prompt settlement of claims, it would be desirable that officers who have charge of sub-districts should be allowed to act as paymasters, in addition to those in command of districts.

District Constables.—Appointments of this nature as a rule are of no advantage to the community or the service; the holders have all the power the law confers upon the police, without the safeguards which result from their training, discipline, and supervision. There are six in the Auckland District—one at each of the following places, viz., Craigieburn, Mangawai, Port Albert, Wade, Waiuku, and Whangaroa—who, I am informed, are of but little use for preventing or detecting crime, and unable or unwilling to act independently.

Reformatory School.—The necessity for an establishment of this kind in Wellington is daily becoming more apparent; and though arrangements can be made, in accordance with the 29th clause of "The Neglected and Criminal Children's Act, 1867," to send them to some other district, the seat of Government, for many reasons, is the most fitting place for the principal establishment.

I have briefly brought under your notice the most important subjects connected with the service that have already come to my knowledge, and will supply the details in my reports showing the requirements of the respective police districts.

I have, &c.,

R. C. SHEARMAN,

Superintendent in Charge, North Island Police.

The Hon. the Commissioner, New Zealand Constabulary,
Wellington.