

SESS. II.—1891.

NEW ZEALAND.

NEW ZEALAND POLICE FORCE

(ANNUAL REPORT OF THE).

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

The COMMISSIONER of POLICE to the Hon. the DEFENCE MINISTER.

SIR,—

Police Department (Commissioner's Office), Wellington, 1st May, 1891.

I have the honour to submit for your information the annual report on the Police Force of the colony, together with the criminal statistics for the year ending the 31st March, 1891.

On the above-mentioned date the strength of the police was 492, against 494 for the corresponding period of the previous year. The totals are made up as follows: Inspectors—first class, 5; second class, 3; third class, 4. Sergeants-major, 4. Sergeants—first class, 22; second class, 22; third class, 14. Constables—first class, 116; second class, 104; third class, 184. Detectives—first class, 2; second class, 5; third class, 4; fourth class, 3. Total, 492; and troop-horses, 109. In addition to the above strength, there are 10 district and 10 Native constables. Three new stations have been opened during the past year—viz., Huntley, Kamo, and Upper Hutt—and one station, Nenthorn, closed. On the 1st April last five Inspectors—viz., 1 first-class, 1 second-class, and 3 third-class—with one sergeant-major were retrenched and struck off the strength, and five districts abolished, as shown in the attached return of strength and distribution; the changes being Bay of Islands District merged into Auckland, Napier into Waikato and East Coast, Marlborough and Nelson into Wellington and Westland, Oamaru into Canterbury, Southland and Lakes into Otago. Since that date these larger districts have been satisfactorily administered, with no complaints of efficiency being impaired; and the amalgamations must cause a considerable saving in expenditure.

Increases to strength have been made at the following stations, viz.: Auckland, 1; Hamilton, 2; Wellington, 1; Westport, 1; Denniston, 1; Hokitika, 1; Christchurch, 2; while decreases to strength have been made as follows: Russell, 1; Whangarei, 1; Tauranga, 2; Te Aroha, 1; Napier, 1; Woodville, 1; Nelson, 2; Ahaura, 1; Reefton, 1; Oamaru, 2; Waimate, 1; Naseby, 1; Dunedin, 2; and Invercargill, 2. Many of these decreases are the result of reducing the number of districts.

The casualties in the Force during the past year have been as follows: Retired on compensation, 11; resignations, 11; discharges, 4; dismissals, 2; deaths, 6: total, 34.

I was appointed Commissioner of the Police Force, *vice* Major Gudgeon, on the 1st July last.

Vacancies in the Force have been almost entirely filled by transfers from the Permanent Artillery or the Prisons Department, and this system works well, the recruits having acquired a good knowledge of discipline before being transferred to the Force; and at any future time, should an augmentation of the Permanent Artillery be suddenly required, the services of these trained gunners will be available, as their places in this department can be supplied by special constables for the time being; and by this system we shall, at no distant date, have in the police a large body of trained artillery-men available at any moment to assist in the defence of our batteries should their services be required. This, however, does not debar special enrolments for the police of desirable men who, from previous service in the London or County Police in England, the Royal Irish Constabulary, or (for mounted men) in the Imperial Cavalry, are likely to prove efficient recruits though they may not have served in the Permanent Militia.

The labour troubles which took place towards the end of last year caused a good deal of extra work and anxiety to the department generally. It is a pleasure to bear testimony to the valuable assistance rendered by the Permanent Force to the police during that trying time, and considerable expense was saved the colony by their utilisation, both for street duty and reserves, at that critical juncture; and I should be ungrateful if I omitted to take this opportunity of thanking the leaders of the various labour parties, who not only advised but, by insisting upon such advice being adopted by their followers, materially assisted the police in maintaining law and order, and so averted serious trouble.

There is always a certain amount of hardship in moving constables with families from one station to another, but in every police service it has been found that to keep men thoroughly efficient, energetic, active, and impartial in the discharge of their duties they must be periodically transferred. On assuming charge of the police, I received instructions to move from the West