

In other crimes the general increases are: Assaults with violence, 28; obstructing and assaulting police, 30; riot and assault, 22; forcible entry, 5; sheep-stealing, 30; attempted suicide, 17. Other crimes have decreased as follows: Forcible abduction, 10; arson, 19; breaking and entering and burglary, 11; cattle- and horse-stealing, 22; breaches of the peace, 63; embezzlement, 24; false pretences, 38; forgery and uttering, 22; larcenies, 277; vagrancy, 119; wife-desertion, 13.

The conduct of the Force has been generally satisfactory, though I regret to have to report there have been several cases of drunkenness. As a rule, however, the men have gained the respect and confidence of the people, and it is generally admitted that there has been very little serious crime undetected. Sly grog-selling is perhaps the most difficult matter we have to deal with, but during the year the number of convictions under this head have been very satisfactory, and the offenders cleverly detected; and all ranks deserve special commendation for their services during the labour troubles.

The present organization no doubt admits of changes in accordance with the altered state and conditions of the colony—that is, bearing in mind that the organization was borrowed in its entirety from one of the other colonies. On the breaking-out of the goldfields in this colony in 1861 it was thought a large number of the criminal class would find their way over here, and to meet this a police system was introduced, and a posse of men were specially engaged to establish and carry out its workings and operations. Evil-doers were sternly met and put down, and that peaceful order of things resulted which has now been established for many years past. But, looking to the altered circumstances of the colony, it is obvious that a more simple system of administration will meet all our requirements, and will ensure more efficiency and economy; in fact, to simplify matters, what is required in this colony is a thoroughly efficient and active municipal and rural constabulary, whose aim should be to preserve law and order rather than make prisoners and obtain convictions.

One step towards this end is to make larger districts and therefore fewer of them, and to give the officers in charge of districts a position and standing that will command confidence and respect. Then follow the example of other colonies in utilising the services of the police in manifold ways, such as acting as Clerks of Courts, Bailiffs, Gaolers, Crown Lands Rangers, census enumerators, assisting County Councils and Corporations in carrying out their by-laws, besides making them useful in multifarious small offices, thus bringing them into touch with the people and affording them, at least, an opportunity or excuse to know what is going on roundabout them, instead of dawdling or idling about their barracks or stations. The working of small districts is fraught with much disadvantage—firstly, the cohesion or co-operation of the Force is somewhat marred; secondly, unnecessary administration and expense are caused; and lastly, the disunion destroys not alone *esprit de corps*, but actually creates jealousy.

There are too many ranks, both of sergeants and constables, and a new classification is much required. Firstly, third-class sergeants should be rated as senior constables; secondly, the rank of sergeant-major, which is an anomaly in a police service, should be abolished; thirdly, the second- and third-class constables should be amalgamated; and lastly, the office of Chief Detective should be done away with. The rank of sergeant-major has virtually become obsolete. In former times the holder of this position was selected for his knowledge of drills, which he imparted to the men, but now the office is administrative, and to a great extent absorbs or monopolizes the duties which ought to devolve upon the Inspector; besides, a sergeant-major is an unnecessary go-between the ordinary rank and file and the superior officer.

The Detective Force is in an unsatisfactory state, owing perhaps to the fact that men have been selected for this branch more from the number of arrests made by them when constables, or the number and verbosity of reports furnished, or, worse than all perhaps, from political influence or favoritism, instead of from special intelligence, or natural gifts and extraordinary powers. A man may be a first-rate constable in all respects, and yet make a perfectly useless and dangerous detective, and no amount of paper examinations or police experience will fit a man for the duties of a detective unless he is possessed of the special and extraordinary qualities which alone fit a man for the position. The chief fault of the present Force is their great anxiety to make arrests, and the jealousy between each other as to who shall get the credit of arresting offenders.

I have endeavoured from time to time to point out that often there is considerably more credit due to the man who works up steadily but surely the links in the chain of evidence against a criminal than to the one who merely finds and arrests the offender.

A great deal of the friction and irritation now existing in the Detective Force is due to the rank of Chief Detective, which it is hoped will be abolished. What is required in this colony is a thoroughly New Zealand Police Force, which will encourage to its ranks the youths of the country, who can feel assured that when once they are enrolled their future career will entirely depend upon their conduct and ability, and not on political or suchlike influences; that they are secure from destitution in times of sickness and privation in old age.

A return is attached showing proportion of police to population, and cost of police per inhabitant in each of the Australian Colonies.

The Hon. the Defence Minister.

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A. HUME, Commissioner.