

who have been disappointed in this respect for many years past, and, though last, not least, would give sixpence a day increase to all who are now holding the rank of third-class constable. Some of these third-class constables have held that rank since 1879, and, though qualified in all respects for promotion have, through no fault of their own but simply from stagnation by former overcrowding of the senior ranks, never obtained any advancement, either as regards pay or status. The sum of 7s. 6d. a day cannot be considered too high a rate of pay for this rank, as the men cannot hope to have charge of stations, and therefore, if married, have to pay house-rent, which their seniors though drawing higher pay save, by being provided with quarters when in charge of stations.

As regards the detective branch of the Force, a thorough reorganization is required, and it should be placed under the control of a man experienced in criminal investigation. Competent detectives cannot be obtained by indiscriminate selections from the ranks of the Police Force, as the special qualifications required for detective work are not possessed by the ordinary uniform constables. Detectives must necessarily be experts of the highest degree, and they should be selected from those who have given proof by their integrity, zeal, judgment, intelligence, and of their capacity for such delicate and responsible duties. In the present day, when by means of the Press and the telegraph the fullest information concerning crimes is sent from one end of the colony to the other, thus enabling the criminal to know what is going on, it is the more important that the detective branch should be composed of men prepared and competent to act with promptitude and tact. It is also important that the members of this force should be strongly impressed with the truth of the maxim that "silence is golden." As stated in last year's report, it still seems apparent that many cases are bungled owing to jealousy between individual members as to who shall be credited with commendation for tracing out the facts, instead of all working in the one common cause. But, be this as it may, the time has now come when some very decided action should be taken in the matter of reorganizing this important branch of the Force, and I am quite prepared to suggest the necessary steps to be adopted for carrying out needed radical changes. The rates of pay of the different classes of detectives are sufficiently high to command good men, and there are no apparent reasons why New Zealand should be behind other countries with respect to her detective force.

The criminal statistics for the year ending the 31st December, 1891, show a decrease of 441 in all offences reported—viz., North Island, 71, and South Island, 370. Drunkenness has decreased by 90 in the former, and 360 in the latter Island. There has been an increase in the undermentioned crimes: Arson, 20; coinage offences, 3; disorderly conduct, 30; escaping from custody, 4; keeping disorderly houses, 44; forgery, embezzlement, &c., 53; manslaughter, 3; obscene and profane language, 79; sly-grog selling, 7. Other crimes have decreased as follow: Assaults, 10; burglary, house-breaking, &c., 38; cattle and horse-stealing, 5; forcible entry, 14; offences under the Gaming and Lotteries Act, 74; larceny, 21; perjury, 6; Police Offences Act, 109; riot and assault, 22; sheep-stealing, 17; vagrancy, 89; deserting wives and families, &c., 14.

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

I have, &c.,

A. HUME, Commissioner.