

1894.

NEW ZEALAND.

CHRISTCHURCH HOTELS: POLICE SUPERVISION OVER

(LETTER AND RETURN RELATIVE TO).

Laid on the Table by the Hon. Mr. Seddon with Leave of the House.

Inspector BROHAM to the COMMISSIONER of POLICE.

SIR,—

Police Office, Christchurch, 6th September, 1894.

In reply to your telegram of this date, requesting me to report in respect to a sub-leader of the *Lyttelton Times* of the 4th instant, regarding the hours of closing of hotels, the two last sentences of which are as follows: "If the police could only be persuaded to do their duty the hours of closing would be a matter of small importance. But while they connive at all sorts of breaches of the law we can expect to get no advantage from the most drastic regulations," I have the honour to point out what seems to me a strong refutation of such a statement.

In the year 1877, when I came first to Christchurch, when the police district ended at the Waitaki, and the population was not more than half what it is at present, the arrests for drunkenness were 2,073; while for last year, with a much larger district, extending now beyond Oamaru, the arrests for drunkenness were 1,169, not much more than half what they were in 1877. Attached is a list showing the number of arrests for drunkenness during May and June, the two months preceding the early closing of hotels; and also for July and August, the two months the early closing lasted. The difference in the totals is but small, but it is on the side of early closing, and it will be observed that sometimes for three days together not a single person was apprehended for drunkenness. Notwithstanding this it may be argued that a large amount of drinking took place within the hotels. I feel satisfied that such was not the case. If a large amount of drinking were done inside, it must have shown itself on the outside in the number of drunken men in the streets. But such a thing as a number of drunken men in the streets is a thing of the past here. I think that I am safe in saying that a more sober town than Christchurch, for its population, there is not in the British Empire. As for the statement that the police connive at all sorts of breaches of the law, I can only suppose that it was written by a strong prohibitionist, whose feelings for the time being had blinded his judgment. In his healthier frame of mind I feel assured he would not make such a false and scandalous accusation.

I have, &c.,

T. BROHAM,

Inspector.

The Commissioner of Police, Wellington.