

1895.

NEW ZEALAND.

THE POLICE FORCE OF THE COLONY

(ANNUAL REPORT ON).

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, 1st July, 1895.

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 ended 31st March, 1895:—

1. On the 1st April last the strength of the Police was 487 of all ranks, being an increase of two during the year. The totals are made up as follows: Inspectors—first-class, 4; second-class, 3; sergeants-major, 3; sergeants—first-class, 20; second-class, 15; third-class, 13; constables—first-class, 119; second-class, 113; third-class, 184; detectives—first-class, 3; second-class, 5; third-class, 2; fourth-class, 3; total of all ranks, 487, with 106 troop-horses. In addition to the above-quoted strength of the Police proper, there were 13 district and 9 Native constables.

2. A new station has been formed at St. Clair, Dunedin, Ashurst has been reopened, and Normanby station closed. District constables have been appointed at Okupu (Great Barrier), Makuri, and Wellington.

3. Increases of strength have been made at the following stations: Auckland, 3; Napier, 2; Wellington, 4; Pahiatua, 1; Christchurch, 3; Dunedin, 2. Decreases have been made at the following stations: Dargaville, 1; Ponsonby, 1; Wairoa, 1; Picton, 1; Greymouth, 1; Brunner-ton, 1; Cromwell, 1; Lawrence, 1; and Port Chalmers, 1.

4. The casualties in the Force during the past year have been as follows: Retired on medical grounds, receiving compensation, 11; resigned, 4; discharged, 2; dismissed, 5; died, 6; transferred to prison service, 1: total, 29.

5. I stated in my last report that to have thoroughly efficient Police Force periodical transfers from one district or station to another for all ranks is imperative, but the difficulties in giving effect to these views are almost insurmountable. Not only do constables appear to think they have a legal right to remain at a station they have been in charge of for a few years, but, immediately orders are issued for a constable's transfer, the inhabitants of that sub-district invariably at once forward a petition praying that the move may not take place. Again, the local medical man is often of opinion that the removal as ordered will be detrimental to the constable's health, and, in the event of these two appeals failing to have the desired effect, it is generally discovered that the wife of the person concerned is in very indifferent health, and the climate to which the husband is ordered would be most unsuitable for his wife and family. Judging by the correspondence that pours in on the department when a move is ordered, one cannot help coming to the conclusion that the majority of the Force are married to chronic invalids. I am strongly of opinion that when once a transfer is ordered the member of the Force should proceed as directed without delay, and, in the event of his not doing so, should sever his connection with the Force; and I venture to think that if such a regulation was strictly enforced the casualties amongst the members of the Force, or their wives and families, would not be any greater than they are at present, whereas a considerable hardship on many who have to move because others will not would be averted.

6. Vacancies in the Force have been, as heretofore, filled by transfers from the Permanent Militia, and this system works satisfactorily, the men, previous to being appointed constables, having been trained to discipline and subordination, while their habits and temperaments are known to those under whom they have served. During the past year 101 constables went through a fortnight's course of gunnery in the different centres, and, with one exception, gave satisfaction to, and were well reported on by, the Artillery officers who superintended the gun-drills. These, in addition to 30 who had joined during the year, give a total of 131 trained gunners amongst the constables, not taking into account those who have joined since the end of last year. If these fortnights' courses of gun-drills can be kept up annually—and there seems no reason why they should not, as the Permanent Militia take the duties while constables are attending these drills—a very important and useful auxiliary force of trained gunners from the Police will be always ready to augment the Permanent Artillery in case of need. It is argued against this system that