

During 1893, 1,169 persons were charged with this offence, while for last year the total of arrests was 937. A considerable increase has occurred in the number of cases of lunacy, vagrancy, and neglected and criminal children. During 1893 the arrests under these headings were: For lunacy, 69; vagrancy, 66; and as neglected and criminal children, 9; while for last year there were eighty-nine cases of lunacy, ninety-five cases of vagrancy, and forty-four cases of neglected and criminal children. There has also been an increase in the number of cases of desertion of wives and families. During 1893 thirty persons were arrested for this offence; while for last year forty-one persons were arrested. Crime, with violence, was below the ordinary during the year. No case of murder or manslaughter occurred.

Owing to the increased interest a large section of the community has lately taken in the licensing question, the police have been much exercised in endeavouring to enforce the law in such a way as to afford no cause of complaint; but the many defects in the Licensing Act have been serious obstacles in their way, and it is evident that, until the law is amended, public opinion will not be satisfied, and the police will continue to be blamed for their want of success in obtaining convictions for breaches of the Act. So long as publicans, or their servants, can give liquors away on Sunday, or after the hours of closing, to all manner of persons without committing a breach of the Act by so doing, or keep their bars open, or allow a number of persons who are neither boarders nor lodgers to remain in the bar, so long will the efforts of the police to enforce the law prove abortive. A *bona fide* traveller (section 157) under the Act is defined to be a person who lodged during the preceding night at least three miles distant from the place where he demands to be supplied with liquor. Any person who lodged three miles away from Christchurch on any Saturday night can therefore come into town upon Sunday and, as a traveller, claim to be supplied with liquor at any number of publichouses he chooses to enter. It seems to me that this section should also be amended so that directly the traveller was supplied at the first hotel he entered he should cease to be a traveller. The question of bars in publichouses is also one requiring attention. A bar at present "means and includes any room, passage, or lobby in any licensed premises open immediately to any street, highway, public place, or public thoroughfare, wherein the public may enter and purchase liquors." This does not prevent publicans from opening what they call "private bars." In some houses one or two of such bars may be found in addition to the public bar.

Attention has been paid since the passing of "The Criminal Code Act, 1893," to the enforcement of the clauses dealing with disorderly houses; and now that all such cases can be dealt with summarily under "The Indictable Offences Summary Jurisdiction Act, 1894," the law is as simple as it was complex and difficult under the old English statute which had force before the passing of the criminal code. A number of persons have been brought up here of late for keeping disorderly houses, and fined in substantial penalties.

In my last annual report I brought under your notice the necessity of giving the police extended powers, so as to enable them to deal effectually with larrikinism. I believe the police have such powers in Australia, and I know that in London the police can arrest for all breaches of the law regulating the traffic in the public streets, while here all that can be done against larrikins for blocking the streets or footpaths, or refusing to move on when ordered to do so by the police, is to take their names and summon them. They usually give false names, in consequence of which the summonses cannot be served, so they too frequently escape punishment altogether. The Press of the colony often complain of the apathy of the police in dealing with larrikinism, quite unaware that the law is such that the police can do next to nothing in such cases. Anything short of the power to arrest for all acts of larrikinism is a serious defect in the law which should be early remedied to afford the police an opportunity of dealing effectually with a serious evil.

Pawnbrokers are bound by law to keep books, which are open to inspection by the police, in which are entered all particulars respecting the articles they receive in pledge. There is equal need of licensing second-hand dealers. The numbers of the latter are steadily increasing. Many of them all over the colony are known receivers of stolen property, and, as they are free to receive and sell without any restriction whatever, they often succeed in eluding the police, and thus encourage the growth of crime.

The three constables who were sent here in February last have been a valuable addition to the strength of Christchurch Station, which, before their arrival, was much undermanned.

The married sergeants at head-quarters stations have reason to be thankful that their claims for house-allowance in lieu of quarters have at length been recognised. For seventeen years the claims of these sergeants have been repeatedly but unsuccessfully represented.

#### INSPECTOR W. S. PARDY, OTAGO, SOUTHLAND, AND LAKE DISTRICTS.

The total numerical strength of this district is 109, made up as follows, and distributed among fifty police-stations: One Inspector, fourteen sergeants, ninety constables, one district constable (at Stewart's Island), 3 detectives; total, 109.

It will be seen by the annual Offences Return, forwarded to your office, that the number of offences reported during the year ended on the 31st December last was 2,043, being a decrease of seventy on the number reported for the previous year, which, upon the whole, shows that crime in this district is about in its normal state. In some offences an increase is shown, while in some other cases a decrease appears. In the cases of arrests for drunkenness there is a decrease of one hundred and forty-two in the present year, as compared with the previous year; but for sly grog-selling an increase of sixteen. In the arrests and convictions for burglaries and breaking into shops, dwellings, &c., there has been twenty-five of an increase, and an increase of nineteen for false pretences. The offence of malicious injury to property shows a decrease of 31, and for obscene and profane language a decrease of twenty, and for obstructing and resisting police a decrease of nineteen.