

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

the training of a soldier tends to give him a want of sympathy with civic surroundings, and makes him harsh and unbending; but such remarks do not apply, as far as can be seen, to our colonial soldiers, and it must be recollected that the Royal Irish Constabulary, which is admitted to be one of the very best Police Forces there are, receives, as recruits on first entering the Force, a purely military training.

7. I stated last year that the New Zealand Police Force labours sorely under two great disadvantages—the want of a superannuation scheme, and, as a consequence thereof, and a result therefrom, tardiness of promotion. It was thought that this might to some extent be overcome by promoting to second class all third-class constables on their completing seven years' service with clean defaulters-sheets; but if this were carried out the second class would be very soon in excess of the numbers provided for by the estimates, and a very serious injustice would be done to some forty now at the head of the list of the third class, who, perhaps, have two or three trivial offences recorded against them, but who, in consequence of these two or three offences, could never be advanced, and would be daily seeing their juniors promoted over their heads. After giving these matters a great deal of serious consideration, I framed a scheme by which increases of pay would be given by length of service, all other things being equal, and if this scheme is adopted I believe it will give general satisfaction throughout the Force, as a man on entering would know, if his conduct and ability gave satisfaction, what exact rate of pay he would be on ten or twelve years hence. If the proposed scheme for advancement is not adopted, I would suggest, in all fairness to the forty constables already referred to as at the top of the third-class list and to many others, that a continuous service of, say, five years without an entry against them should wipe out any previous record of misconduct, and so place them in a position that will prevent the constant super-session by their juniors on account of irregularities committed many years ago. To carry out efficiently the proposed scheme it will be necessary to have only four classes of rank—viz., Inspectors, sergeants, constables, and detectives, and for these ranks only provision has been made in the proposals now before the Government. At the present time we have no less than thirteen different ranks in a force of less than five hundred men.

9. Perhaps the most important duties this department have to deal with is the administration and the enforcement of the laws relating to the drink traffic, gambling, the social evil, and larrikinism; but some are beset with difficulties and legal technicalities which are almost insurmountable, and directly there is any failure the Police are alone blamed. If a member of the Force is moved, the transfer is attributed to the influence of the publicans and brewers, or the Prohibitionists, and one or other of these associations has a grievance; but to give the credit to the department for honesty in carrying out the transfer in the interests of the service is not for a moment considered. Whenever it is discovered that, beyond a doubt, the liquor-laws are not being carried out, or that offences generally are rife, in any particular locality, such removals as the head of the department may deem necessary, regardless of the length of time any one concerned may have been stationed in the district, should be forthwith carried out, irrespective of protests from any particular section of the community, and, if any sinister motives can be proved against the head of the department, then, and not till then, should his orders be interfered with by influential local interested persons or any one else.

10. In commenting on this liquor question a great deal is said about the Force being reorganized, but I boldly assert that, as long as the liquor-laws remain as at present, no organization could possibly successfully grapple with the question. What is required is that clause 25 of "The Imperial Licensing Act, 1872," *in toto*, should be on the statute-book of the colony, instead of merely the last few lines of that clause, as at present. Then there should be a proper definition of what a "bar" is, only one bar should be allowed, and no liquor should be allowed to be sold or exposed for sale except in the bar. Then, again, travellers should cease to be such after visiting the first hotel they enter after arriving in town. As the law now stands, a traveller can obtain liquor at every licensed house in a town during prohibited hours without committing any breach of the law. In support of the statement that special attention has been given to these matters during the past year, it will be seen by a reference to the criminal statistics given in this report that decreases in the crimes of drunkenness amount to 657, and of sly grog-selling twenty-one. If the law is only amended in the directions indicated, it will be found that the Police as at present organized are quite capable and ready to carry out workable laws. The suppression of gambling has also received considerable attention during the past year, while the social evil and larrikin pests have been considerably lessened since the introduction of the Criminal Code Act. To deal effectually with the larrikin nuisance, as pointed out by Inspector Broham in his report attached, the Police require extended powers, to enable them to at once arrest persons who block the streets or footpaths and refuse to move on when ordered by the Police to do so. At present proceedings can only be taken by summons, a cumbrous and unsatisfactory plan, which leads often to the erroneous belief that the Police show apathy in dealing with this pest.

11. In addition to the police duties proper performed by the Force during the past year, I cannot omit mentioning the meritorious services rendered by Sergeant Gamble and six specially-selected constables from Auckland at the Great Barrier Island, in connection with the wreck of the steamship "Wairarapa," under most trying circumstances. The party left Auckland on 1st November last, and were employed on this special duty till 21st of that month, and during that interval they succeeded in recovering the mails—for which they were rewarded and thanked by the Postal Department—and, with the assistance of the Maoris living on the island, were enabled to recover and bury some sixty-three bodies, taking accurate descriptions in each case; and in many instances bodies already buried by the Maoris had to be exhumed to get descriptions and any valuables they might have, which, to the credit of the Natives be it said, were not interfered with; and, as an illustration of their honesty, it may be noticed that in the case of one body which the Maoris had buried fifteen sovereigns were found on its being exhumed by

the Police. By means of the careful descriptions taken, many bodies were identified by relatives and friends, while all valuables found were handed over to the agent for the Public Trustee. To say this unusual and trying duty was commendably carried out by this party of Police conveys no adequate idea of what they had to go through. When it is considered that the scene of the disaster is as far north as the Great Barrier, that it was the middle of summer, and that many of the bodies were not recovered or exhumed till ten days or a fortnight after the disaster, some faint idea can be formed of the exceptional and horrible nature of the duty carried out day and night, in a foul and dangerous atmosphere, on scant rations; yet there was no grumbling or complaints, and persons who visited the island while the work was going on testify to the kind, humane, and sympathetic manner in which these trying duties were performed. The directors of the Union Steamship Company were also pleased to express their high appreciation of the work done by this department in connection with that lamentable disaster.

12. On the 29th April, 1894, Inspector Hickson and fourteen constables, with twenty men from the Permanent Militia in Auckland, proceeded to Paeroa, on the Upper Thames, where a dispute had arisen between the Ngatikei and Ngatiwhaki sections of the Hauraki Natives over the possession of a gravel-pit; and there is little doubt that but for the prompt appearance and interference of this armed force on the scene there would have been bloodshed, but, owing to the bold stand made by Inspector Hickson, acting under your instructions, both parties were speedily disarmed, a peaceful solution of the dispute was arrived at in a very brief space of time, the Police and Permanent Militia were back in Auckland within a week of leaving there, and I am happy to say there has been no renewal of the quarrel since. Good service has also been rendered by the Police and Permanent Militia recently in protecting surveyors and the unemployed in surveys and road-making through the Urewera country, on both the Whakatane and Galatea sides; but these duties are not yet completed, and the men are still in camp at Te Waite.

13. The criminal statistics for the past year show an increase of 365 in the total number of all offences reported in the colony during the year, as compared with the previous twelve months. The principal increases are: Assaults (indecent), 11; bankruptcy offences, 34; breaches of the peace, 87; burglary, breaking into shops, &c., 134; carnally knowing, or attempting to know, girls, 9; cattle-maiming, 8; concealment of birth, 9; deserting and failing to provide for wives and children, 138; disorderly conduct, 73; false pretenses, 34; forgery and uttering, 35; gaming offences, 20; illegally on premises, 27; indecent exposure, 15; keeping disorderly houses and brothels, 34; malicious injury to property, 43; murder, 4; neglected and criminal children, 34; obstructing and resisting police, 48; perjury, 18; rape, 11; sheep-stealing, 12; theft (undescribed), 54; theft from dwellings, 159. Other crimes have decreased as follows: Arson, 4; assaults occasioning bodily harm, 24; assaults on police, 9; conspiring to defraud, 8; cruelty to animals, 7; drunkenness, 657; embezzlement, 17; failing to support near relatives, 31; lunacy, 31; murder (attempted), 3; obscene and profane language, 61; obstructing railway-lines, 10; sly grog-selling, 21; horse-stealing, 21; vagrancy, 34.

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

15. Extracts from the annual reports of Inspectors in charge of districts are attached, and a perusal of them will be found interesting.

16. It affords me much pleasure to record in this official report an act of devotion to duty on the part of Constable Costin, of Culverden Station. This constable was dispatched to search for a man who was lost during the recent terrible snow-storms. He was nearly snowed up himself, but struggled on, and succeeded in recovering the body of the unfortunate man who had succumbed to the cold and exposure. I also draw attention to the gallant conduct of a civilian friend of the constable's, Mr. Gilbert Gordon, who insisted on accompanying him on his perilous journey.

17. As regards baby-farming, commented upon in my report for 1893, recent events have clearly proved that there were good and sufficient grounds for recommending that an Infant Life Protection Act should be placed on the statute-book of the colony. In the now notorious Dean case it was found that there are certain defects in the Act which, as pointed out by Inspector Pardy, require to be amended. I have already brought these matters to your notice. The conduct and energy of the Police in tracing out and bringing to justice the baby-farmer already referred to is worthy of commendation, and all who were engaged in getting up the case deserve the thanks of the community for bringing their work to a satisfactory conclusion.

18. In conclusion, it may be stated that one of the main objects aimed at in the administration of the department has been to bring the Police in closer touch with the people, and thereby establish a system of confidence and reliance on each other. In meeting deputations of Prohibitionists and others I have endeavoured to impress upon my hearers that in such work unity is strength, and that if they and the department could only unite their labours, and feel that such desirable confidence was thoroughly established, much good must result. In many instances the desired end has been arrived at, but from recent events in Christchurch it would appear that the mere mention of the department to what is known there as the Prohibition party can only be compared to the simile of holding out a red rag to a bull. The reason for this seems quite inexplicable, and it is hoped in future that that party will take the department into their confidence and work together for the one common cause—the better carrying-out of the liquor-laws. There seems no apparent reason why the Police and every section of the community should not work hand-in-hand in endeavouring to maintain law and order. I feel it my duty, before closing this report, to point out that in order to maintain efficiency it is necessary that some of the older sergeants and constables should be retired, as from age, infirmities, and perhaps former associations, they are now unable to efficiently carry out the duties demanded of them according to present-day requirements; but, owing to their being no retiring-scheme in force, if permitted, they will hamper the Force by continuing to serve for some years longer.

I much regret to have to record the death, on the 21st February last, of Mr. J. M. Goldfinch, the accountant to the department, in which he had served well and faithfully since the 17th August, 1872, to the entire satisfaction of the various officers under whose supervision he had come. He was a thoroughly reliable officer, and his loss was deeply mourned by the Force.

I have, &c.,

A. HUME,

Commissioner of Police.

The Hon. the Defence Minister.

EXTRACTS FROM ANNUAL REPORTS OF OFFICERS IN CHARGE OF DISTRICTS.

INSPECTOR J. HICKSON, AUCKLAND, WAIKATO, AND BAY OF ISLANDS.

During the year 2,814 offences were reported, as against 2,597 during the year ended the 31st December, 1894, showing an increase of 217. The principal increases were in the following cases:—

Abusive and threatening language: Sixty cases were reported, showing an increase of thirty-eight. For these offences thirty-two persons were summarily convicted and twenty-eight discharged.

Assaults, common: 154 cases were reported, showing an increase of fifty-four. 152 persons were prosecuted, of whom ninety-three were summarily convicted and fifty-nine discharged.

Assaults occasioning bodily harm: Six cases were reported, showing an increase of four. Six persons were prosecuted; one of them was convicted at the Supreme Court, two cases were summarily convicted, and three discharged.

Assaults on the police and obstructing and resisting police: Sixty-six cases were reported, showing an increase of fifty-four. Sixty-six persons were arrested; of these twenty-three were convicted at the Supreme Court and one discharged, forty were summarily convicted and two discharged.

Assault and robbery: Twenty-one cases were reported, showing an increase of seventeen. Sixteen men were arrested; seven were convicted at the Supreme Court and two discharged, and seven were discharged in the Magistrate's Court.

Breaches of the peace: Eighty-five cases were reported, showing an increase of sixty-four. Eighty-five persons were prosecuted, and of these seventy-four were summarily convicted and eleven discharged.

Burglary, breaking into dwellings and shops: 150 cases were reported, showing an increase of sixty-nine. Fifty-four persons were prosecuted; of these twenty-one were convicted at the Supreme Court and six discharged, twenty-one were summarily convicted and six discharged.

Cattle- and horse-stealing: Twenty-two cases were reported, showing an increase of fourteen. Twenty-six persons were prosecuted, and of these fifteen were convicted at the Supreme Court and three discharged, one summarily convicted, and seven discharged.

Deserting and failing to provide for wives and children: Ninety-eight cases were reported, showing an increase of twenty-three. Ninety-six were prosecuted, and of these thirty-six were summarily convicted and sixty discharged.

Deserters and stragglers from Her Majesty's ships of war: Twenty-four cases were reported, showing an increase of thirteen. Twenty-one were arrested and summarily dealt with.

Disorderly and riotous conduct: Twenty cases reported, showing an increase of eight. Twenty persons were arrested and summarily convicted.

Illegally on premises: Thirty cases were reported, showing an increase of thirteen. Thirty-two persons were prosecuted, and of these twenty-four were summarily convicted and eight discharged.

Malicious injury to property: 100 cases were reported, showing an increase of seven. Eighty were prosecuted, and of these two were convicted at the Supreme Court, forty-four summarily convicted, and thirty-four discharged.

Refusing to quit licensed premises: Six cases were reported; none during the previous year. Six persons were prosecuted and summarily convicted.

Sheep-stealing: Nine cases were reported; none during the previous year. Nine persons were prosecuted, three of whom were committed for trial, but were discharged by the Supreme Court, and six were discharged at the Magistrate's Court.

Theft: 570 cases were reported, showing an increase of sixty-one. 251 persons were prosecuted, of whom sixteen were convicted at the Supreme Court and two discharged, 189 were summarily convicted, and forty-four discharged.

Theft from dwellings and the person: 113 cases were reported, showing an increase of twenty-one. Forty-four persons were prosecuted, and of these one was convicted at the Supreme Court and one discharged, thirty-one were summarily convicted, and eleven discharged.

There were decreases in the following offences: Assaults (indecent), 3; cruelty to animals, 11; disobeying orders of Court, 6; discharging fire-arms, 12; disturbing meetings and congregations, 5; drunkenness, 11—a marked decrease; embezzlement, 7; gaming, 5; lunacy, 25; manslaughter, accessory to, 10; murder, and attempt to commit, 2; obscene and profane language, 18; receiving stolen property, 3; smuggling, 6; suicide, attempted, 4; vagrancy (having no visible lawful means), 19; trespass, 10.

The total number of persons prosecuted was 2,265, being an increase of eighty. In the cases of common assault, and of assaults and robbery, many of the complainants were intoxicated when assaulted, therefore their evidence could not be relied on; this will account for a large proportion of the discharges. In the cases of burglary and breaking into dwellings and shops, in many cases the property was not identifiable, and in the cases of theft a large number were of a trivial nature, and the property stolen not identifiable, which will account for the small number of prosecutions when compared with the number of offences reported.

Many members of the criminal class arrived during the year, and several of them have been convicted of offences committed here, some of them being long sentences for assaults and robbery, housebreaking, &c.

The employment of some constables in plain clothes I find very effectual in checking offences, more especially at night.

A Native constable was appointed at Kaikohe in May of last year, and he has given much satisfaction in the performance of his duties. A district constable was appointed at the Great Barrier in February last.

The residents of Waihi, Avondale, and Pahi are much pleased at the decision of the Government to establish police-stations at these places on an early date. New residences have been built for the constables at Aratapu and Pukekohe.

The police party sent to the Great Barrier in November last, on receipt of intelligence of the wreck of the steamship "Wairarapa" there on the night of the 29th October, 1894, rendered good service in recovering bodies and getting them buried. The property found and taken charge of by the police has, with the exception of some small articles of jewellery handed to the relatives of deceased, been handed over to the agent of the Public Trustee. Well-deserved praise has, I am pleased to be able to record, been bestowed on the police who were at the Great Barrier; and I am much pleased that the services of Sergeant Gamble and the constables who were with him have been recognised by the Government.

In April, 1894, in obedience to instructions from the Hon. the Premier, I proceeded to Paeroa, with a party of Police and Permanent Force, under command of Lieutenant Hume, to prevent a breach of the peace which was imminent between two Native tribes. With the able assistance of Mr. Kenny, Stipendiary Magistrate at the Thames, we succeeded to the entire satisfaction of the Premier and yourself.

One constable was dismissed, another reduced a class and transferred, three were fined, and a few for minor offences were reprimanded; with these exceptions the conduct of the sergeants, detectives, and constables, has been satisfactory, displaying much zeal in the performance of their duties. Many of the constables have succeeded in obtaining convictions for sly grog-selling.

INSPECTOR J. EMERSON, NAPIER AND EAST COAST.

In accordance with your circular No. 8/95, I beg to report on the Napier and East Coast Police District for the year ended the 31st March last as follows:—

The criminal statistics for this district during the year ended on the 31st December last disclose a decrease of 100 offences as compared with return for previous year. The most marked alteration in the offences under the different headings is that of drunkenness, there being a decrease of 117 cases for the year; but crime of a more serious nature has increased, seventy-two cases going into the Supreme Court, as against fifty during the previous corresponding period. These offences were of the usual nature, none being of a nature so grave as to require special mention. Burglary and housebreaking increased rather seriously, twenty-four cases being reported, and twenty-one offenders brought before the Court, an increase of twelve on the previous year.

In December last, seven constables, formerly members of the Permanent Artillery, went through a course of gunnery instruction at Wellington and Auckland Forts, the men from Hawke's Bay going to Wellington, and those from Gisborne to Auckland.

Two constables were dismissed for misconduct, and two were discharged on compensation, as unfit for further service, on the report of a Medical Board.

The police-stations generally are in fairly serviceable order; some of the buildings require painting and other slight repairs, which will be reported on from time to time. The old buildings used as police-quarters at Napier are in a very bad state, being scarcely habitable, and the erection of new quarters, cells, &c., is now under notice, and receiving the attention of the Public Works Department.

INSPECTOR J. B. THOMPSON, WANGANUI AND WEST COAST.

As will be seen by the annual Offences Return from this district, filed in your office, there has been an increase in some offences during the year, and a decrease in others, the chief increase being in desertion of wives and families, false pretences, drunkenness (a slight increase only), and larceny from dwellings; the chief decrease being in breaches of the peace, cattle- and horse-stealing, larceny, obscene and profane language. No new police-stations have been opened within this district, but the Normanby Station has been closed.

The usual monthly meeting of Natives continues to be held at Parihaka by Te Whiti, the Maori prophet, the largest being as usual on the 17th March, but for some time past they have led to no difficulty or trouble. *Hakas* and *poi* dances are indulged in daily, and the usual feasting goes on as long as the food lasts, when the visitors disperse and return to their respective settlements, some a long distance off, but no excessive drinking takes place at these monthly gatherings at Parihaka.

Although no seizure in connection with illicit distillation has been made in this district during the year, the police are very watchful for any information that may lead to such seizures and arrest of the offenders concerned.

The police-buildings generally throughout the district are in a fair condition, and, with the exception of Wanganui, will not need much expenditure for repairs during the ensuing year. At Wanganui it has been decided by the Public Works Department to erect new police-buildings, and same are now in progress.

The conduct of the sergeants and constables throughout the district has been creditable to the department, and their discharge of their police duties, as well as the numerous other duties they have to perform, has been on the whole very satisfactory.

In conclusion, I have to report that this district is fast increasing in population and importance, the work of settlement is making good progress, and the district throughout is in a fairly prosperous condition.

INSPECTOR P. FENDER, WELLINGTON AND MARLBOROUGH.

In compliance with circular, No. 8/95, of the 6th instant, I have the honour to submit the following report upon the Wellington Police District for the year ending 31st of March last :—

New stations have been opened at Mount Cook and Makuri during the year, and the Levin Station closed. Ashurst, Feilding, Foxton, Palmerston North, and Terrace End Stations have been added to this district from the New Plymouth district, making a total of thirty stations.

The casualties during the year have been : Discharged for misconduct, 1 ; discharged on compensation, 4 ; death, 1.

The conduct of the men throughout the district has, with few exceptions, been good, and punishments rare ; a considerable number have been rewarded, and several promoted.

As recommended in my last annual report, a library has been established and furnished at the Central Station, and has, as I anticipated, proved a great benefit and convenience to the men, who are now to be found about the station more than formerly.

I beg to again refer to the question of providing quarters for married constables at a reasonable rent, a convenient distance from the Central Station. The high rents in Wellington, and the long distances the men have to walk to their duty, are a constant source of dissatisfaction.

The Offences Return already furnished to your office shows a total increase over last return of 230 offences, being 3,310 last year, as compared with 3,080 the previous year. The increase is most noticeable as regards thefts and such-like offences. This is no doubt attributable to the increased number of the floating criminal class, who come here attracted by the comparative prosperity of the city.

Another three or four constables are required at the Central Station to properly cope with the work, which is increasing daily ; what with escorting prisoners, sending extra men to assist at up-country townships (especially Palmerston North), and other calls, such as relieving men on leave and sick, this station is seldom within seven or eight men of its nominal strength.

INSPECTOR F. MCGOVERN, NELSON AND WESTLAND.

The strength of the district is as follows—viz. : One Inspector, five sergeants, thirty-one constables, and two district constables, being a decrease of one sergeant and two constables since the 31st March, 1894.

There is at present a vacancy for one constable at Greymouth, and another constable will also be required for Mokihinui Station as soon as the quarters now in course of erection are finished and the station opened.

During the year the following changes have been effected—viz. : Transfers, Constable W. Smith from Levin to Greymouth, Constable H. Beattie from Picton to Brunner ; death, 1 ; resignation, 1 ; discharge on compensation, 1 ; dismissals, 2.

The horse "Nelson," of Greymouth Station, having been found unfit for further service, has been sold, and a fresh horse purchased.

The number of police-stations remains the same as on the 31st March, 1894.

There has been a slight increase in the number of minor offences as compared with last year.

The ravages of the "fire fiend" in Nelson have, I am happy to be able to report, ceased, for, since the arrest and conviction of an offender, no fires of a suspicious character have occurred, and the police engaged in the case deserve credit for the manner in which they collected evidence and brought the offender to justice.

In October last a serious tragedy took place at the Tophouse, two men being murdered, and the murderer committing suicide before the police had time to reach the scene. With this exception, the district has been remarkably free from crimes of a very serious nature.

In June, 1894, an illicit still, fitted up with all appliances requisite for the distillation of whiskey, was unearthed in the bush a few miles from Reefton ; but, unfortunately, the police have been unable to collect sufficient evidence to justify a prosecution, and the parties principally interested have escaped with the loss of their plant and stock.

The police-buildings throughout the district are in fair condition, sundry slight repairs having been effected as required. The quarters for the police at Hokitika, with one exception, have been removed and thoroughly renovated ; and I trust the necessary work requiring completion will soon be taken in hand. The work in connection with the station-buildings at Mokihinui will shortly be completed.

During the year nine constables proceeded to Wellington for the purpose of undergoing a course of gun-drill.

The conduct of the members of the Force stationed in this district has, with one or two exceptions, been creditable, and the numerous additional duties have been carried out satisfactorily.

INSPECTOR T. BROHAM, CANTERBURY AND NORTH OTAGO.

The return of crime for the year ended the 31st December, 1894, forwarded to your office on the 18th March last, shows that during the year 2,573 offences of various kinds were reported to the police, and 2,387 persons were arrested or otherwise proceeded against ; while, for the year 1893, 2,654 offences were reported, and 2,487 persons were proceeded against. It thus appears that the total number of offences reported last year was less by eighty-one than the number reported in 1893. A reduction of 232 has taken place in the number of arrests for drunkenness.

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.

In regard to sly grog-selling, this, owing to the closing of so many publichouses at the last annual licensing meetings, especially in the Clutha Licensing District, where all hotel-licenses were refused, increased to a great extent, as nearly all those houses that were closed continued to carry on the illicit sale of liquor. This caused a great outcry from the temperance party. Every effort was made by the police to bring the offenders to justice, in which they were fairly successful—seven convictions having taken place in the Clutha district, one in the Gore district, and one in the Port Chalmers district, while other prosecutions are pending.

Larrikinism, the scourge of colonial towns, I am happy to state, has been kept well in hand, and consequently there is little to complain of in that respect in this district.

As regards the social evil, a strict surveillance has been kept over immoral houses, and prosecutions, whenever necessary, successfully carried out against them, the result being that the evil is kept well in check.

The Infants' Life Protection Act has been strictly enforced, so far as possible, but in its present form it is little more than a formality, and of little use in checking the abuses it was intended to do, as will be shown in the notorious case now pending before the Courts. For instance, the age, two years, is far too young to be effective in protecting infant life. Again, the fact that it is necessary to prove that money was paid to the baby-farmer alone made the Act abortive, seeing that the greatest secrecy is observed on the part of those who hand over the unfortunate infant to the baby-farmer, consequently the police are not in a position to prove that money was paid, as they have no means of finding out to whom the infant belonged, the receivers of the infants simply refusing to give the police any information, and bidding them defiance with impunity. There are many other defects in the Act, which render it deficient in effecting the object it was intended for—viz., the protection of infant life. All my remarks will be fully borne out by the case before referred to.

With regard to the discipline of the Force in this district, I may say that, upon the whole, the sergeants, constables, and detectives have been well conducted, with the following exceptions—viz., six constables were fined in amounts from 2s. 6d. to £1, two constables were severely reprimanded, and one constable was admonished for offences against discipline, and they have been attentive both as regards their police duties and the numerous other duties they are called upon to perform for other departments of the Government services and for local bodies.

There have been three deaths of members of the Force during the year, and four members of the Force were discharged during the year.

A new police station was opened at St. Clair on the 31st of December, 1894.

In conclusion, I may say that twenty-four constables underwent ten days' artillery drill at the Otago Heads in November and December last.

RETURN showing the NUMBER of OFFENCES REPORTED, PERSONS APPREHENDED, and COMPARISON of CRIME during the Year ending 31st December, 1893, and Year ending 31st December, 1894.

Offences.	1893.		1894.								Increase.	Decrease.	
	Number of all Offences reported.	Number of Offences reported.	Persons apprehended or summoned.						Total Number of Persons apprehended or summoned.	Number of Convictions amongst those committed for Trial.			
			Committed for Trial.		Summarily Convicted.		Discharged.			M.			F.
			M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.					
Abandoning children	1	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	..
Abortion, procuring	3	1	..	..	..	2	..	..	1	..	..	..	2
Absconding from apprenticeship ..	4	2	..	..	..	..	..	..	2	..	..	..	2
Absconding from bail	4	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	4
Absconding from industrial schools ..	34	24	..	..	24	..	..	..	24	..	..	..	10
Abusive and threatening language ..	248	254	..	..	142	12	76	24	254	..	..	6	..
Armed, with felonious intent .. ..	..	1	..	..	1	..	..	..	1	..	..	1	..
Arson	34	30	6	..	..	..	6	..	12	3	..	..	4
Arson, attempted	5	7	2	1	..	..	..	..	3	1	..	2	..
Assaults, common	684	689	..	..	403	19	232	30	684	..	..	5	..
Assaults, indecent	23	34	22	..	4	..	6	..	32	16	..	11	..
Assaults occasioning bodily harm ..	46	22	9	..	4	1	7	..	21	7	..	..	24
Assaults on bailiffs .. ..	..	2	..	..	1	1	..	..	2	..	..	2	..
Assaults on police	74	65	..	..	62	2	1	..	65	..	..	..	9
Assaults and robbery	36	38	14	..	..	..	15	..	29	10	..	2	..
Bankruptcy offences	13	47	24	..	8	..	13	..	45	11	..	34	..
Begging	5	9	..	..	8	..	1	..	9	..	..	4	..
Bestiality	2	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Bigamy	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1
Breaches of the peace	239	326	..	..	266	4	53	3	326	..	..	87	..
Burglary, breaking into shops, dwellings, &c. ..	261	395	108	7	39	2	30	1	187	74	1	134	..
Being in possession of house-breaking implements ..	..	3	..	..	3	..	..	..	3	..	..	3	..
Carnally knowing girls	1	7	6	..	..	..	1	..	7	4	..	6	..
Carnally knowing, attempted .. ..	..	3	3	..	..	..	..	..	3	2	..	3	..
Cattle- and horse-stealing (<i>see</i> theft). ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Cattle-maiming	3	11	2	..	..	..	1	..	3	2	..	8	..
Coinage offences	4	1	..	..	1	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	3
Concealment of birth	1	10	..	5	..	..	..	2	7	..	2	9	..
Conspiring to defraud	19	11	8	..	3	..	..	..	11	8	..	..	8
Contempt of Court	5	1	..	..	1	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	4
Cruelty to animals	105	98	..	..	81	1	16	..	98	..	..	..	7
Cruelty to children	3	5	..	..	3	2	..	..	5	..	..	2	..
Cutting and wounding	17	22	14	..	2	..	5	1	22	9	..	5	..
Damaging police uniform	9	15	..	..	15	..	..	..	15	..	..	6	..
Demanding goods with menaces ..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1
Deserting and failing to provide for wives and children ..	181	319	2	1	146	6	125	7	287	1	..	138	..
Deserters and stragglers from H.M. ships ..	21	32	..	..	26	..	3	..	29	..	..	11	..
Deserting merchant vessels	11	10	..	..	6	..	..	..	6	..	..	..	1
Discharging fire-arms	14	14	..	..	7	..	7	..	14	..	..	..	..
Disobeying orders on board ships ..	25	47	..	..	42	..	5	..	47	..	..	22	..
Disobeying orders of Court and summonses	252	219	..	..	136	..	70	2	208	..	..	..	33
Disobeying terms of release under First Offenders' Probation Act ..	5	4	2	..	2	..	..	..	4	2	..	..	1
Disorderly and riotous conduct ..	125	198	..	..	148	19	30	1	198	..	..	73	..
Distillation offences	2	5	..	..	1	..	4	..	5	..	..	3	..
Distributing obscene literature ..	2	9	..	..	6	1	2	..	9	..	..	7	..
Disturbing meetings and congregations ..	82	55	..	..	40	..	14	..	54	..	..	..	27
Drunkenness	5,251	4,594	..	..	3,702	769	110	13	4,594	..	..	..	657
Embezzlement	56	39	22	..	12	..	5	..	39	20	..	..	17
Enchantment, pretended .. ..	..	2	1	1	..	..	..	..	2	..	..	2	..
Escaping from custody	6	6	..	..	5	1	..	..	6	..	..	..	..
Escaping from custody, abetting ..	..	1	1	..	..	..	..	..	1	1	..	1	..
Escaping from lunatic asylums ..	5	4	..	..	3	1	..	..	4	..	..	..	1
Failing to support parents and near relatives	131	100	..	..	64	1	32	..	97	..	..	..	31
False declarations	7	6	..	..	3	..	3	..	6	..	..	..	1
False pretences	145	179	37	..	73	2	46	1	159	29	..	34	..
False trade-marks .. ..	..	8	..	..	6	..	2	..	8	..	..	8	..
Fish, illegally taking .. ..	..	5	..	..	4	..	1	..	5	..	..	5	..
Forcible entry	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1
Forgery and uttering	69	104	74	6	1	..	10	1	92	60	4	35	..
Fortune-telling .. ..	..	6	1	5	..	..	..	..	6	..	..	6	..
Furious riding and driving	51	58	..	..	51	..	7	..	58	..	..	7	..
Game, illegally shooting	16	25	..	..	23	..	2	..	25	..	..	9	..
Gaming offences	23	43	1	..	32	1	8	1	43	..	..	20	..
Illegally on premises	100	127	..	..	85	15	24	3	127	..	..	27	..
Indecent exposure and behaviour ..	86	101	..	..	83	4	10	2	99	..	..	15	..
Keeping disorderly houses and brothels	28	62	1	12	10	20	6	13	62	1	11	34	..
Killing animals with intent to steal the carcases	3	3	1	..	..	..	2	..	3	..	..	..	..
Libel, criminal	2	2	2	..	..	..	..	..	2	1	..	..	..

RETURN showing the NUMBER of OFFENCES REPORTED, PERSONS APPREHENDED, and COMPARISON of CRIME during the Year ending 31st December, 1893, and Year ending 31st December, 1894—continued.

Offences.	1893.	1894.										Increase.	Decrease.
	Number of all Offences reported.	Number of Offences reported.	Persons apprehended or summoned.						Total Number of Persons apprehended or summoned.	Number of Convictions amongst those committed for Trial.			
			Committed for Trial.		Summarily Convicted.		Discharged.			M.	F.		
			M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.					
Lunacy	421	390	..	..	220	106	49	14	389	..	..	..	31
Malicious injury to property ..	449	492	6	..	313	18	105	2	444	3	..	43	..
Manslaughter	2	4	4	..	..	..	..	..	4	4	..	2	..
Manslaughter, accessory to ..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1
Murder	2	6	..	2	..	..	1	..	3	..	..	4	..
Murder, attempted	5	2	2	..	..	..	..	..	2	..	..	..	3
Neglected and criminal children	161	195	..	..	95	74	12	14	195	..	..	34	..
Obscene and profane language ..	437	376	..	..	261	59	45	10	375	..	..	..	61
Obstructing Inspectors of Fac- tories .. .. .	..	3	..	..	..	..	3	..	3	..	..	3	..
Obstructing and resisting police	130	178	18	6	137	8	9	..	178	17	6	48	..
Obstructing railway-lines ..	11	1	..	..	1	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	10
Obstructing railway officers ..	..	2	..	..	2	..	..	..	2	..	..	2	..
Obstructing surveys	6	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	6
Obstructing thoroughfares ..	7	64	..	..	60	..	4	..	64	..	..	57	..
Obstructing a mine .. .. .	..	1	1	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	1	..
Pawning, illegal	2	2	..	..	..	2	..	..	2	..	..	..	..
Perjury	13	31	12	3	2	..	11	3	31	4	..	18	..
Personating electors .. .. .	..	3	2	..	1	..	..	..	3	1	..	3	..
Prisons offences (loitering about, and communicating with prisoners)	9	7	..	..	6	..	1	..	7	..	..	..	2
Rape	11	22	13	..	..	..	9	..	22	3	..	11	..
Rape, attempted	13	10	8	..	..	..	1	..	9	4	..	..	3
Receiving stolen property ..	19	20	7	..	7	..	4	2	20	3	..	1	..
Refusing to quit licensed premises	19	31	..	..	25	1	5	..	31	..	..	12	..
Rescuing cattle from being im- pounded	12	12	..	..	8	2	2	..	12	..	..	..	..
Removing survey-pegs .. .. .	..	3	..	..	2	..	..	..	2	..	..	3	..
Robbery under arms	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1
Sacrilege	3	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	2
Sheep-stealing (see Theft).	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Shooting with intent	7	4	2	..	1	..	1	..	4	..	..	..	3
Sly grog-selling	71	50	..	..	25	10	12	3	50	..	..	..	21
Smuggling	13	11	..	..	10	..	1	..	11	..	..	..	2
Sodomy, attempted	1	2	2	..	..	..	..	..	2	2	..	1	..
Soliciting prostitution	6	2	..	..	..	1	..	1	2	..	..	..	4
Stamps, fraudulent removing ..	..	2	..	..	..	1	1	..	2	..	..	2	..
Stamps, counterfeiting and uttering .. .. .	..	3	3	..	..	..	..	..	3	..	..	3	..
Stone-throwing	42	100	..	..	74	1	24	..	99	..	..	58	..
Stowing away on board ships ..	46	46	..	..	45	..	1	..	46	..	..	..	..
Suicide, attempted	43	43	10	4	3	2	20	4	43	4	2	..	..
Sureties of the peace	19	25	..	..	18	2	4	1	25	..	..	6	..
Theft (undescribed)	1,828	1,882	70	2	766	60	183	24	1,105	52	1	54	..
Theft as a bailee	31	10	1	..	3	1	3	..	8	..	..	..	21
Theft, attempted	2	6	..	..	3	2	1	..	6	..	..	4	..
Theft of cattle and horses ..	128	107	34	1	2	..	34	..	71	27	1	..	21
Theft of dogs	3	7	..	..	2	..	1	..	3	..	..	4	..
Theft of pigs	1	5	..	..	3	..	2	..	5	..	..	4	..
Theft of sheep	26	38	10	..	6	..	8	..	24	1	..	12	..
Theft from dwellings	128	287	14	..	123	5	22	4	168	8	..	159	..
Theft from the person	74	100	10	2	14	..	4	1	31	6	2	26	..
Theft of post letters	1	5	2	..	..	..	..	..	2	2	..	4	..
Theft by servants	5	11	7	..	2	1	1	..	11	3	..	6	..
Threatening letters	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1
Travelling by rail and refusing to pay fares	3	17	..	..	15	1	1	..	17	..	..	14	..
Trespass	49	41	..	..	25	..	15	1	41	..	..	..	8
Unlawfully falling timber ..	3	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	3
Vagrancy	315	349	..	..	205	75	44	25	349	..	..	34	..
Totals	13,165	13,530	601	58	8,275	1,316	1,636	214	12,100	406	30	1420	1055
												Inc.	365

