

evening in question had been supplied on the previous Saturday night to two members of a certain theatrical company. These two gentlemen were subsequently called by the police, and proved that they did not arrive in the town in which the hotel was situated until three days after it had been sworn that they drank the wine; therefore that part of the defence fell to the ground. The licensee admitted that he had made a mistake as to the date, and then stated the wine had been supplied to two other men, whose names he gave. In support of this, the licensee, his wife, and the two men in question were called, and all swore that the wine had been supplied to these two men on the particular Saturday night preceding the Sunday when the bottle was seen by the police, and one of the men stated that he paid for the wine in consequence of having backed a certain horse that had won a race that day. Upon that evidence the summons was dismissed. After the dismissal the police discovered that the particular race upon which the man had sworn he had won the money, and in consequence of which he had paid for the wine, was not run on that Saturday at all, but on the following Saturday. A fresh summons was then issued, and the case again came on for hearing. Of course, the second statement had to be abandoned. The defence then was a denial on the part of two of the persons who were found on the premises by the police that they had been supplied with drink in the house on the occasion in question, and the police not being in a position to disprove this, as they had done the two previous statements, the Court was satisfied, and dismissed the second summons.

Now, it is clear the persons who made all the foregoing incorrect statements did so either without proper consideration as to what they were saying, although on their oath, or that they were swearing what they knew to be untrue. Had one incorrect statement only been made, the more charitable construction might reasonably have been placed on their action; but it is difficult to understand how any person who had any regard whatever for the oath could have innocently fallen into two such mistakes.

My predecessor has, in his annual reports, advocated the inclusion in the licensing laws of the colony something equivalent to the 25th section of "The Intoxicating Liquor Act, 1872" (35 and 36 Vict., c. 94), and I repeat his recommendation most strongly, in justice to the Police Force, who are now blamed for not enforcing a law which is practically unenforceable.

#### GAMING LAWS.

The laws relating to gambling, particularly street betting, require amending. As the law is at present, the police are unable to cope with the evil. In the streets of the principal cities of the colony street betting is becoming an intolerable nuisance to the inhabitants who have no sympathy with the persons conducting this traffic. It is also becoming a danger to young persons using the streets, who would probably never think of betting if the law made it possible for the police to cleanse the thoroughfares of these betting-men, and thus remove in a measure the great facilities that now exist for indulging in this form of gambling. In November last I submitted suggestions to you, which, in my opinion, would meet this want, if carried into law.

#### INSPECTORS.

The Inspectors, considering the immense amount of work they have to perform, especially in the four large districts, have performed their duty well, but it is impossible to disguise the fact that owing to advanced age some of them are incapable of throwing into their work the amount of energy, both mental and physical, required of men holding such responsible positions, and, consequently, the efficiency of the Force suffers to some extent. They are, however, with one exception, men of vast experience and very long service, during which they have faithfully served the colony, and therefore have a right to expect liberal treatment in their old age.

#### SUB-INSPECTORS.

I consider the cities of Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch, and Dunedin demand the whole services of an officer above the rank of sergeant or sergeant-major, and I recommend the creation of the rank of Sub-Inspector. At present, whenever the Inspector leaves his headquarters at the places named, the whole control of these cities devolves on a sergeant or sergeant-major, the official correspondence and other matters accumulate, and, as a consequence, the public wants are neglected, and the efficiency of the service suffers. A Sub-Inspector would be an assistant to the Inspector, and would assume charge in the absence of the latter from headquarters. He would also attend the Magistrate's Court to conduct police cases, and generally direct the police work of the city. These Sub-Inspectors would also be in training for Inspectors. The step from sergeant to Inspector is too great, and but few men can adapt themselves readily to a position so much in advance of that held by them so recently. Very many of the complaints made by the public of police inefficiency are due solely to the fact that the Police Force has not kept pace with the ever-increasing demands arising from the continual expansion of the four cities above named.

#### SERGEANTS.

It is a well-established fact that the sergeants are the backbone of a Police Force. Good sergeants make good constables, and *vice versa*. Now, I regret to say, the sergeants of this Force are its weakest part. When I assumed command there were thirty-nine sergeants in the whole Force, fourteen of whom were upwards of fifty-five years of age. I have since promoted seventeen constables to the rank of third-class sergeants, but up to the present, with few exceptions, these freshly promoted men scarcely realise their new position. With a little more experience in their new rank, and by being kept up to their work, most of them will no doubt develop into good sergeants, but means should be found to clear away many of the older sergeants, and thus make room for as many younger and more active men. A pension system would meet this difficulty.