

At the larger stations, wherever possible, there should be an enclosed yard in which prisoners who may be detained for a longer period than one night could be exercised.

At no place in the colony is the want of additional cell-accommodation felt more than at Lambton Quay Station, and the question of a sum to cover the cost of providing the necessary additional accommodation being placed on the estimates has already been submitted to you.

INCREASE OF POPULATION.

The cities of Wellington, Auckland, Christchurch, and Dunedin are extending their respective areas to such an extent that in the near future the question of police protection for those places will have to be very seriously considered.

The great bulk of the crime of the colony, particularly against property, occurs in these cities, or the immediate neighbourhood thereof. In many of these suburban districts the system of police protection is by stationing single constables at various points, each constable acting independently of the others. My opinion is that better results would follow if many of these isolated stations were done away with and larger ones instituted, with at least three constables under a sergeant attached to each. A system of reliefs extending over the whole twenty-four hours could then be established. This system is already in operation in some of the suburbs and it should be extended as far as possible as occasion arises.

COST OF POLICE, ETC.

A return is annexed hereto showing the cost of police per inhabitant, and proportion of police to population in each of the Australasian colonies, from which it will be seen that New Zealand is very much beneath either of the other colonies.

I have &c.,
J. B. TUNBRIDGE, Commissioner.

EXTRACTS FROM ANNUAL REPORTS OF OFFICERS IN CHARGE OF DISTRICTS.

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

In accordance with instructions contained in Circular No. 9 of the 12th instant, I have the honour to forward the following report on the Auckland, Waikato, and Bay of Islands Districts for the year ended the 31st March, 1898:—

The strength of the district on that date was one Inspector, ten sergeants, five detectives, ninety-two constables, eight district constables, three Native constables, and one matron, or a total of all ranks of 120, distributed amongst fifty-three stations.

New stations have been opened during the year at Karangahake, Kaikohe, and Hikurangi.

The casualties during the year are as follows: Death, 1; dismissed, 2; resigned, 4; and discharged on compensation, 1.

About the average number of constables have been punished for breaches of police discipline. With these exceptions the conduct of the police has been generally good.

The Annual Offence Return, which was forwarded to your office on the 16th February last, shows an increase in all offences reported of 274 cases over the previous year. The chief increases being—common assaults, 51; burglary, breaking and entering shops and dwellings, 45; damaging police uniform, 17; disobeying orders of Court, &c., 28; failing to support near relatives, &c., 61; malicious injury to property, 29; sly-grog selling, 78; theft, 78. The chief decreases being—deserting wives and children, 95; drunkenness, 13; keeping disorderly houses, 19; horse- and cattle-stealing, 17; sheep-stealing, 27. During the year 147 males and five females were committed for trial, of whom 119 males and five females were convicted at the Supreme Court, being an increase over committals for previous year of ninety-two males and two females.

Vigorous action has been taken during the year to stamp out the evil of sly-grog selling, and the numerous convictions obtained and the substantial penalties imposed on those convicted will, it is hoped, act as a warning to those who might feel inclined to engage in the illicit sale of liquor.

During the year I have visited the country stations as frequently as I could, and have found the police to be attentive to their several duties, which they discharge in a satisfactory manner.

Several of the station buildings require painting and repairs, an estimate of the cost of which will be forwarded to you in a few days. New buildings are required at Otorohanga and at other places, where rent is now being paid. During the year new police-stations have been erected at Hikurangi and Coromandel.

The district is fairly prosperous, and population continues to increase. The influx of population from other parts of New Zealand and adjoining colonies is, no doubt, due to the gold-mining and timber industries, both of which are in a prosperous condition.

INSPECTOR J. EMERSON, NAPIER AND EAST COAST.

In compliance with Circular 9/98 of the 12th April instant, I have the honour to report upon the Napier and East Coast Police District for the year ended the 31st March, 1897, as follows:—

The Annual Return of Offences for the year ended 31st December, 1897, shows an increase of thirty-seven offences as compared with the previous year, the total being 1,205 offences reported in 1896, against 1,242 in 1897; of the latter, sixty-nine cases were sent for trial, resulting in forty-six convictions. Breaches of the peace show an increase of twelve; disorderly and riotous conduct, 6; false pretences, 10; lunacy, 7; malicious injury to property, 13; obscene and profane language, 8; and theft, 10. The other offences are about stationary. None of the cases dealt with are sufficiently serious to specially single out for remark.