

1899.

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 MINISTER of JUSTICE.

SIR,—

Police Department, Commissioner's Office, 3rd May, 1899.

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 last.

STRENGTH OF FORCE.

On the 31st March last the strength of the Force was 554 of all ranks, being an increase of 18 during the year. The total is made up as follows: Inspectors, 7; Sub-Inspectors, 4; sergeants-major, 2; sergeants, 51; constables, 463; detectives, 15; and probationers, 12. In addition to above there were 4 police surgeons, 4 matrons, 20 district constables, 7 native constables, and 94 horses.

STATIONS.

New stations have been formed at Linwood, Mangaweka, Poro-o-tarao, and Te Kuiti; and district constables have been appointed at Broad Bay (Otago Peninsula) and Waikaremoana.

AUGMENTATIONS.

Augmentations have been made at—Christchurch, 1; Dannevirke, 1; Hawera, 1; Sydenham, 1; Tauranga, 1; Thames, 1; Wanganui, 1; and Wellington South, 1.

REDUCTIONS.

Reductions have been made at—Auckland, 2; Dunedin, 2; Oamaru, 1; Patea, 1; and Wellington, 1.

CASUALTIES.

The casualties have been—Retired on medical grounds, with compassionate allowance, 11; resigned, 10; dismissed, 8; died, 1; retransferred to Permanent Militia, 1; and services dispensed with, 3: total, 34. This is five in excess of the preceding year.

CRIMINAL STATISTICS.

These statistics, which include all offences reported, are made up for the year ended the 31st December last, and show an aggregate increase of 1,159 as compared with the totals of the preceding year.

The principal increases are—Abusive and threatening language, 28; assaults occasioning bodily harm, 22; assaults on police, 41; conspiring to defeat the ends of justice, 24; cruelty to animals, 68; deserting and failing to provide for wives and children, 66; disobeying orders of Court and summonses, 60; drunkenness, 328; forgery and uttering, 23; gaming offences, 116; illegally on premises, 69; neglected and criminal children, 43; stowaways on board ships, 22; theft undescribed, 151; and theft from dwellings, 146.

The principal decreases are—Assaults, common, 78; burglary, breaking into shops, dwellings, &c., 60; failing to support parents, near relatives, &c., 55; malicious injury to property, 26; sly-grog selling, 59; and trespass, 39.

REMARKS ON CRIMINAL STATISTICS.

These statistics, taken as a whole, are not by any means satisfactory. They show—(a) that as regards petty thefts ("Thefts Undescribed" and "Thefts from Dwellings," under which headings the most serious increases have occurred) the criminal classes were more active during the year 1898 than during the preceding year; and (b) that the police as a preventive force were not so efficient as could be desired. On the other hand, the number of more serious offences against property (burglary, breaking into shops and dwellings, &c.) has decreased by sixty, being 15.1 per cent. under the figures for the year 1897, thus showing that the more dangerous class of criminals have been kept well in check.