

As a detective body, however, the Force compares more favourably with the preceding year. In the case of "Thefts Undescribed" and "Thefts from Dwellings," where the aggregate increase on the figures for 1897 was 297, the percentage of arrests to offences committed was, for 1897, 57·9, and for 1898, 60·7. Again, taking all classes of theft, including burglary, &c., the percentage of arrests to offences committed is again in favour of 1898, for although the aggregate increase during that year on the figures of 1897 was 301 the percentage of arrests increased from 56·1 in 1897 to 59·5 in 1898.

Two out of the three recommendations I made in my last report, with a view of increasing the efficiency of the Force—namely, the augmentation of fifty men and the appointment of four Sub-Inspectors—have been adopted by the Government. The want of some system of superannuation (my third recommendation) is felt as acutely as ever, and the retention in the service of men who are worn out naturally militates against the Force becoming an efficient body.

Public attention has latterly been drawn to what appears to be a very serious increase in the number of offences against women and children. The following return, giving the number of such offences during the past twenty years, however, shows this to be more imaginary than real, for while during that period the population has increased by 64·2 per cent. the offences in question have increased only by 51·9 per cent., notwithstanding that between the years 1889 and 1896 the age of consent was raised from twelve to sixteen. It having been suggested in some quarters that the activity of police since the year 1891 in closing houses of ill-fame has tended to bring about an increase in the number of these offences against females, and has also increased the number of illegitimate births, I have included in the return figures upon those points for what they are worth. Offences against females, and illegitimate births, have undoubtedly very considerably increased since the date named, but I am not prepared to offer any opinion as to the cause thereof, except that as regards the former I think the increase is more attributable to the raising of the age of consent than to any other cause. The figures are as follows:—

Year.	Number of Offences against Women and Children.				Number of Prosecutions against the Keepers of Houses of Ill-fame.	Proportion of Illegitimate Births to every 100 Births.
	Indecent Assaults.	Carnally knowing Girls and Attempts to carnally know.	Rape and Attempts to rape.	Total.		
1879	28	...	24	52	...	...
1880	35	...	16	51	...	...
1881	34	...	20	54	...	...
1882	22	...	25	47	8	...
1883	27	1	16	44	1	...
1884	26	...	12	38	...	...
1885	22	1	7	30	...	...
1886	22	...	22	44	2	3·12
1887	26	2	20	48	2	3·23
1888	20	...	23	43	3	3·05
1889	9	3*	27	39	1	3·32
1890	10	3	16	29	2	3·30
1891	15	3	19	37	46	3·49
1892	13	4	6	23	30	3·32
1893	23	1	24	48	28	3·70
1894	34	10†	32	76	62	3·80
1895	15	5	17	37	37	4·50
1896	25	6†	26	57	45	4·48
1897	42	20	9	71	21	4·41
1898	43	17	19	79	25	4·23

\* Age of consent raised from twelve to fourteen years.

† Age of consent raised from fourteen to fifteen years

‡ Age of consent raised from fifteen to sixteen years.

#### DRUNKENNESS, SUNDAY-TRADING, ETC.

Drunkenness has, I regret to say, a decided upward tendency, the increase for the year on the figures of 1897 being 328. Wellington has the unenviable notoriety of being the most intemperate of the four principal cities, the figures for those cities and suburbs being—Wellington, 953; Auckland, 697; Dunedin, 597; and Christchurch, 583. The number of arrests for drunkenness on Sundays during 1898 were also higher in Wellington than in either of the other above-named cities, the figures being—Wellington, 63; Dunedin, 46; Christchurch, 40; and Auckland, 33. Taking the latter figures as an indication as to how far the law relating to Sunday-closing is observed, it would appear that Wellington is the greatest offender in this respect, and the question "What are the Wellington police doing?" naturally follows. During the past year the number of informations laid against publicans in the four cities for breaches of the licensing-laws was—Wellington, 45, resulting in seven convictions; Auckland, 20, with six convictions; Christchurch, 21, with six convictions; and Dunedin, 12, also with six convictions. It will therefore be seen that in Wellington, although there were more than double the number of informations laid than in