

The new scale of pay has given great satisfaction to the men, and I have no doubt will be a stimulus to increased energy and zeal in the discharge of their duties.

A number of the police in this district are discharging the duties of Clerk of Court, bailiff, and various outside appointments, but in view of the rapid increase of settlement and population, and consequently increased work, I anticipate that it will be found necessary in the near future to either increase the number of police in this district or relieve the present members of the Force of a considerable amount of the outside duties in question, in order to have them effectually performed. These remarks apply particularly to Patea, Stratford, Eltham, and Feilding Police-stations.

I consider the conduct of the members of the Force as a whole has been good, and the numerous duties have been faithfully performed.

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INSPECTOR P. PENDER, WELLINGTON AND MARLBOROUGH.

The casualties during the year have been—Three constables resigned and one constable discharged.

The conduct of the men has been good, and the punishments very few.

The offences return for the year 1898 shows an increase of offences reported as compared with 1897 of 457, the numbers respectively being 3,975 and 3,518. Drunkenness contributes 131 of this increase, the remainder being divided amongst various offences, including breaches of the Gaming Act, false pretences, &c. There is a decrease in the number of cases of burglary, breaches of the peace, obstructing police, vagrancy, and receiving stolen property. There was one case of child-murder acquitted, and three cases of attempt to murder. The increase in the number of cases of crime reported is, in my opinion, partly attributable to the increase of population, the influx of the criminal classes from other parts of New Zealand and Australia, attracted here by the increased prosperity of the place.

There has been a marked improvement in the conduct of the licensed houses (hotels) during the year, which no doubt is due to a more strict enforcement of the Licensing Acts.

The new regulation granting house-allowance to married members of the Force has removed a long-standing grievance, and the improved scale respecting pay has had an excellent effect on the efficiency of the Force in this district, but a pension scheme is much required.

The detectives have been fairly successful in dealing with crime, but this branch of the department still requires improvement.

With respect to the training depot established at Mount Cook during the year 1898, I beg to report that the work there has been carried out very satisfactorily. The system of instruction, including drill, imparted to the probationers is excellent in every respect. One squad of probationers (with the exception of one man discharged as unsuitable) have undergone their two months' training, and on passing the necessary examination were transferred to different parts of the colony for duty. A fresh squad of twelve men is now at the depot under instruction—one was discharged as unfit for the Force. They are making very satisfactory progress in a knowledge of their duties, and will soon be ready for duty where required. In consequence of the limited accommodation available at Mount Cook, not more than about a dozen men can be in training at one time, and the results which must follow such an excellent system of police instruction may not therefore be observable on the Force generally for some time.

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INSPECTOR J. W. ELLISON, NELSON AND WESTLAND.

As regards crime, it will be observed from the offences return there has been a net decrease of ninety-three offences, including forty-three of drunkenness and three of murder. Sly-grog-selling cases decreased by three. This illegal traffic is carried on in some isolated places, but the trade done is on a limited scale. It shall, however, receive due attention.

I have visited as many stations as other pressing duties and the limited time at my disposal would permit, and, so far as I can judge, I believe the new regulations regarding pay and periodical increments have had a most beneficial effect, and will prove an advantage to the department. A more contented feeling is prevalent, and therefore increased zeal, vigilance, and carefulness must be expected to follow. The rent-allowance made to married constables is also much appreciated. All members of the Force appear to understand that good conduct and length of service carry their own reward, whilst the additional hope of promotion is open to those who, by assiduity and ability, show themselves to be fitted for advancement.

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INSPECTOR T. BROHAM, CHRISTCHURCH AND NORTH OTAGO.

The return of crime for the year ended the 31st December, 1898, forwarded to your office on the 24th January last shows that during that year 3,128 offences of various kinds were reported to the police, as against 2,899 cases reported during 1897, while 2,869 persons were either taken into custody or proceeded against by summons for various offences. Of these, the most numerous were the arrests for drunkenness, for which 1,120 persons were apprehended, as against 1,012 for 1897.

Sixty-eight industrial-school boys absconded during the year, as against a similar number for 1897. A large number of the cases of breaking and entering houses and stealing therefrom were committed by industrial-school boys, who frequently escape from the school in groups of three and four together, and continue robbing and pilfering until arrested by the police, and again returned to Burnham.