

forgery, fraud, &c. During the past year there has been a net decrease of fifty-three on the figures of the preceding year in respect to the preventable offences above named, which tends to show that the Force, as a preventive body, has at least maintained the state of efficiency which existed during the year 1899.

For offences against the person the percentage of arrests, &c., to offences committed was 98·14, as against 97·65 in 1898 and 98·01 in 1899; and for offences against property the percentage was 70·86, as against 64·62 in 1898 and 68·19 in 1899; thus showing that, as a detective body, the Force has continued to improve.

Indecent and sexual offences, such as indecent assaults, bestiality, carnally knowing girls, attempted ditto, indecent exposure and behaviour, rape, attempted rape, and sodomy, show a net increase of thirty-seven, the figures being 269 for the year under review, against 232 for the preceding year. I trust, however, the exemplary punishment recently inflicted for outrages on girls of tender years will have a salutary effect.

DRUNKENNESS, ETC.

During the year the number of charges of drunkenness was 7,299, being an increase of 1,010 on the figures of the preceding year. This increase far exceeds that of any previous year, so far as the records show. The number contributed by each of the four principal centres was: Auckland, 1,289 (1,057 males and 232 females), against 1,145 in 1899; Wellington, 1,061 (842 males and 219 females), against 855; Christchurch, 720 (533 males and 187 females), against 568; Dunedin, 626 (511 males and 115 females), against 535.

As stated in my previous reports, I think the increase in the number of charges of drunkenness is attributable to the continued prosperity of the colony, the increase in foreign-going shipping, and the continued increased activity of police in clearing the streets of intoxicated persons.

The total number of arrests for drunkenness on Sundays in the four principal centres during the year was 172, against 166 in 1899, an increase of six. These arrests were divided as follows: Auckland, 25 (22 males and 3 females), against 39 during the preceding year; Wellington, 54 (43 males and 11 females), against 46 during the preceding year; Christchurch, 45 (36 males and 9 females), against 29 for the preceding year; Dunedin, 48 (42 males and 6 females), against 52 for the preceding year. The foregoing figures indicate that the law with respect to Sunday-trading, especially in Wellington, Christchurch, and Dunedin, is still infringed to a considerable extent, and, as stated in my former reports, this will continue to be so as long as the law remains in its present state.

I reiterate the remarks made in former reports on the question of the law being amended on the lines of "The Intoxicating Liquors Act, 1872," in force in England, which renders any person, who is neither a lodger nor *bonâ fide* traveller, found on the premises during prohibited hours liable to a prosecution.

During the year there were 242 prosecutions against publicans throughout the colony, resulting in eighty-one convictions, against 260 prosecutions and 108 convictions in 1899. They were distributed as follows: Auckland District, 50, with eighteen convictions; Napier, 14, with two convictions; Wanganui, 41, with ten convictions; Wellington, 20, with thirteen convictions; Greymouth, 32, with sixteen convictions; Christchurch, 46, with eight convictions; Dunedin, 39, with fourteen convictions. The percentage of convictions to prosecutions during the year fell to 33·47, against 40·19 in 1898 and 41·53 in 1899.

SLY-GROG SELLING.

There were 169 prosecutions for sly-grog selling during the year, resulting in 107 convictions, and fines amounting in the aggregate to £1,351 4s. were imposed, as against eighty-two prosecutions, forty convictions, and fines amounting to £432 during the preceding year.

The difficulties experienced in former years in obtaining evidence in sly-grog cases still maintain, and it is only by very considerable expenditure, and having recourse to methods which are repugnant alike to a large majority of the public, the police, and those who assist the latter, that the necessary evidence to warrant prosecutions has been obtained. My remarks under this heading in last year's report still apply in their entirety.

GAMING OFFENCES.

There were 155 prosecutions under the gaming laws during the year, resulting in ninety-six convictions, against 220 prosecutions and 179 convictions during the preceding year. Great difficulty is still experienced in dealing with the illegal "tote" betting men under the existing law. As you are aware, a Bill amending the gaming laws has been before Parliament for several sessions, but has not been passed into law.

Until the police are given power to arrest without warrant betting-men found following their avocation in the streets or other public places, those "pests to society" will continue to flourish. The law in England gives this power, and it works well. The Courts of the colony hold that betting at "tote" odds must be absolutely proved before a conviction can follow. On the other hand, certain Magistrates condemn the police if they seek to make bets themselves, or procure other persons to do so, with a view of obtaining the necessary evidence, on the ground that by so doing they become *particeps criminis*. It will therefore be seen that it is practically impossible for the police to deal effectively with the incitement to gamble afforded by the presence in the streets of the walking "tote" man. If the police had power to arrest without warrant, then the memoranda, &c., which these betting-men must necessarily carry with them would be seized and used as evidence.