

some districts, as travelling allowance. It is now provided by general order that the manager of such sports, races, &c., shall requisition for the number of police required on each occasion, and shall at the same time guarantee the payment of the expenses of transit, meals, &c., of the men so employed. These expenses have heretofore been a charge upon this department, and have, in the aggregate, amounted to a large sum, especially in districts where communication could only be had by means of coach or horseback, and where, in consequence, small race-meetings are numerous.

It having been considered advisable to cancel section 10 of the Police Regulations, whereby it was provided that officers should retire at the age of sixty-five and men at the age of sixty, it will, in the interests of the public, be necessary to name some age at which both officers and men must retire from the service. I would suggest that both officers and men should do so at the age of sixty-five, at which period of their lives they would not be likely to be of much value to the public service. I regret that I have been unable to decide on any system by which it would be possible to provide a general pension scheme for the force, unless assisted by a yearly grant-in-aid from the Government. As pointed out in last year's report, it might be made compulsory on those under the age of thirty years to insure for not less than £50 per annum; but this would not touch the majority of the men now in the force.

I would also draw your attention to section 59 of the same regulations, by which it is compulsory that all recruits for the police force should be drawn from the Permanent Militia of the colony. This rule limits the choice for police in a manner that cannot fail to be detrimental to the service now that the Militia are reduced in number. I would, therefore, suggest for your consideration that the rule should be altered to this extent: that, while the Militia should have the first chance, yet, in the event of their being no suitable man available from that corps, I should be at liberty to take on men from outside.

For some years the police have been under certain vexatious restrictions in the matter of conducting prosecutions in Resident Magistrates' Courts. In 1876, in the case of *Piper v. McCluskey*, on appeal against a conviction by a Resident Magistrate for illegally permitting the sale of liquor, it was decided by His Honour Judge Ward that "No police officer is entitled to act as counsel or solicitor, nor has he a right to conduct a case unless he be the actual informant." The result of this judgment has been that counsel for the defence have frequently objected to experienced Inspectors or Sergeants conducting cases, on the ground that they were not the informants. As it generally happens that the constable who lays the information has had comparatively little experience, the objection thus taken has generally damaged the prosecution and tended to bring about a miscarriage of justice. I would therefore urge that the police be empowered by statute to prosecute in all criminal cases, as is already the case under the Police Offences Act, section 46.

I regret that I have been unable to get a handy volume of police statutes printed, but have not felt it advisable to urge this matter lest the Criminal Law Consolidation Act should pass this year, in which case the majority of the Acts selected by me for the volume in question would not be required.

I attach schedules showing lands reserved for police purposes in various districts throughout New Zealand since the 31st March, 1887; and also of works authorised and completed, showing the police-stations which have been repaired, rebuilt, or purchased; as well as a return showing the proportion of police to population, and cost per inhabitant, in this and the adjoining colonies, the comparison being highly favourable to New Zealand.

Police-buildings are urgently required at Dunedin, Riverton, Bluff, Otautau, Wyndham, and Naseby, where the quarters are either uninhabitable from age or rented at ruinous prices. I would point out that, as a rule, properties can now be purchased for but little over five years' purchase of the rent paid by us.

I have much pleasure in reporting that the behaviour of the force under my command has been excellent, and leaves nothing to be desired in the matter of conduct and discipline.

I have, &c.,

W. E. GUDGEON,
Commissioner.

The Hon. the Defence Minister.