

1892.
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 DEFENCE MINISTER.

Police Department (Commissioner's Office), Wellington,
1st July, 1892.

SIR,—

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, 1892.

On the 1st April, 1892, the strength of the Police was 482, as against 486 last year. The totals are made up as follows: Inspectors—first class, 4; second class, 2; third class, 1. Sergeants-major, 4. Sergeants—first class, 19; second class, 22; third class, 15. Constables—first class, 113; second class, 103; third class, 185. Detectives—first class, 2; second class, 5; third class, 4; fourth class, 3. Total, 482. There are also 114 troop horses. In addition to the above quoted strength, there are 12 district and 9 Native constables. The plan of amalgamating stations and districts, by making them fewer and consequently larger, started last year, is working well. New stations have been opened at Moawhanga, Otorohanga, Stratford, Inglewood, Ngakawau, and South Invercargill; while those at Te Kuiti and Normanby have been closed. Increases of strength have been made at the following stations—viz., Eden Terrace (Auckland), 1; Dargaville, 1; Wellington, 3; Nelson, 1; Dunedin, 1; while the strength at Auckland, Russell, Greymouth, Reefton, Westport, Denniston, Hokitika, Christchurch, Rangiora, Oxford, Ashburton, and Temuka, has been reduced in each case by 1.

The casualties in the Force during the past year have been as follows: Retired on compensation, 7; resigned, 10; discharged, 3; dismissed, 2; died, 3: total, 25.

Vacancies in the Force have been almost exclusively filled up by transfers from the Permanent Militia, and no fault can be found with the men so enrolled, who are—in addition to being well set up, drilled, and disciplined—intelligent, zealous, and reliable. This system of keeping up the Force is commendable, from many points of view, and in case of need these men must prove a valuable assistance to the Permanent Militia, as from the training in gunnery, &c., already received, they would be fit to take their places in the batteries at the shortest possible notice, and render material aid to the more expert gunners.

From my experience during the past year, I am more than ever convinced that to have a thoroughly efficient Police Force, it is imperative that the Inspectors, Sergeants, Detectives, and constables should be periodically moved from one station to another. In making these changes I have invariably endeavoured, as far as possible, to put an end to what has existed for some years past, and has rightly been looked upon as a just cause for complaint—namely, young third-class Constables being put in charge of country sub-districts, while their seniors, the older hands, have been kept in towns doing street duty. It will, of course, take some time for this injustice to be entirely worked out; but as sub-districts become vacant, the next senior for a station, provided he is fully qualified, is selected, while his place in the town is taken by the last recruit. It is fully recognised that if transfers are carried out in a capricious and indiscriminate manner unnecessary hardship and considerable discontent may be caused; but no transfers are sanctioned except those the exigencies of the service require, or, perhaps, in a few cases, at the special request of the constable concerned.

The duties performed by the Police, outside of what is understood as strictly constabulary work, are increasing considerably, and there is no objection to such duties as Clerks of Court, Bailiffs, Inspectors of Factories, Registrars of Electors, Agents for Public Trustee, Census Enumerators, Rangers, and such like, being undertaken by this department in some of the smaller sub-districts, as, while the duties are more advantageously and economically performed, the Police are brought in closer touch with the people, and a system of confidence and reliance is thereby established.