

The alarming statement made by this association was, of course, very fully inquired into, with the result that it was found that the portion of the Force serving in the Otago district had, through ignorance and unreliable information, been grossly maligned and most unfairly represented. At my last visit to Dunedin, I not only invited, but literally tried to extract complaints from men of the Force who, I thought, might possibly have some trivial or imaginary grievances; but I did not succeed in getting one solitary complaint, and I have no hesitation in stating that the portion of the Force stationed in Otago is at the present moment as thoroughly efficient, well disciplined, faithful, vigorous, and tactful in the discharge of its duties, as any force need be. It must be recollected that the New Zealand Police Force labours sorely under two great disadvantages—the want of a “Superannuation Scheme,” and, as a consequence thereof, and a result therefrom, tardiness of promotion.

8. Every man who enters the Police Force of the colony should have an incentive to rise and be made to feel that assiduity and efficiency will meet with due recognition and advancement; but owing to the higher ranks being in excess of the required numbers, there has been little promotion for some years past, and, in order to relieve the stagnation, I was instructed to promote to second-class rank all third-class constables who had served seven years in the Force with clean defaultersheets; and shortly afterwards I was directed to promote to second-class rank all third-class constables who had seven years’ service in the Force with only one trivial entry in their defaultersheets, and these promotions no doubt caused some dissatisfaction. In a Police Force, the fact of a constable having a clean defaulter-sheet should not be the only qualification for promotion, as there are so many different contingencies which should be taken into consideration. For example, two constables join at the same time; one is posted to a city, the other goes to the country. The city man is open to all sorts of temptations, which are wanting in the country station, while he is constantly under the eyes of his superiors, and consequently more liable to have an entry recorded against him in his sheet which would at once debar him from promotion; while his more fortunate comrade in the suburban or country station, though perhaps by no means so efficient a constable, would be far less likely to sufficiently commit himself to cause an entry to be made against him, and would thereby claim advancement before the one who had been less advantageously situated. Again, the public generally, especially in small communities, are apt to think that their local constable is *par excellence* as near perfection as possible, and ought at once to be promoted, quite forgetting that the Police is a colonial and not a local force. The Commissioner’s object should be to make the members of the Force smart, capable officers, well-versed in all that pertains to the prevention and detection of crime, instead of as nearly automatic as it is possible to make them; but, unless these matters are left to the independent discretion of him who is appointed to administer the Act, injustices will be done, which can only tend to create dissatisfaction and discouragement generally, and destroy that *esprit de corps* which is so necessary to the well-being and efficiency of a Police Force.

9. The efforts of the Police to suppress Sunday trading, liquor-selling after hours, and sly grog-selling, have been extremely successful during the past year, and many convictions have been obtained, notwithstanding the defects and complications in the liquor laws, and considerable credit is due to all ranks of the Force for their exertions in this direction.

10. The supervision of licensed houses, in accordance with the present-day ideas, is a matter of considerable difficulty, when it is recollected that only a few years ago the public feeling on the liquor question was decidedly dormant, and, as long as breaches of the Act were not very glaring, they were passed over; and if the Police had at that time done otherwise, they would probably have been accused of oppression by those very people who now clamour for the strict enforcement of the law. The Police have always been in touch with licensees, and in the past have depended largely on the publicans for information, and no doubt they now find it somewhat difficult to turn aggressively upon the latter, when formerly forbearance was the price of assistance when wanted; and it is for these reasons that credit is due for the faithful and impartial manner in which the Police have carried out these duties. The suppression of larrikinism has been specially studied during the past year with good results, and, though it is by no means yet stamped out, it is decreasing visibly. Considerable progress has also been made with the suppression of houses of ill-fame, since the introduction of the Criminal Code Act of last session.

11. From the return attached, showing the proportion of Police to population, and cost of Police per inhabitant in each of the Australasian Colonies, it will be seen that New Zealand is far below any of her sister colonies in both these respects; but, owing to the increase of population, more especially in the towns and suburbs of the principal centres, it has been considered necessary to make provision in this year’s estimates for a considerable augmentation in the number of constables, while provision has also been made for matrons for police stations at the four centres.

12. The Infant Life Protection Act, passed last session, is working extremely well, and has undoubtedly put an end to what threatened to be a serious evil.

13. The criminal statistics for the year ended 31st December, 1893, show an increase of 490 in the total number of all offences reported in the colony during the year, as compared with the previous twelve months. The principal increases are: Assaults (common), 57; assaults occasioning bodily harm, 29; assault and robbery, 10; bankruptcy frauds, 8; burglary, breaking into shops, &c., 96; cattle- and horse-stealing, 44; cutting and wounding, 11; deserting wives and families, 42; disobeying orders of Court, 53; embezzlement, 16; false pretences, 7; forgery and uttering, 11; failing to support parents and near relatives, 38; larceny (undescribed), 82; larceny from dwellings, 32; lunacy, 55; obscene and profane language, 27; attempted murder, 4; rape, 4; attempted rape, 5; sly grog-selling, 42; attempted suicide, 21; trespass, 19. Other crimes have decreased as follows: Assaults (indecent), 6; cruelty to animals, 33; drunkenness, 109; gaming, 59; larcenies as bailees, 13; malicious injuries to property, 14; murder, 9; neglected and criminal children, 16; vagrancy, 65.