

7. In my former reports I have without avail drawn attention to the necessity of assimilating our Licensing Act to section 25 of the English Act. It is easy to write blaming the police for not enforcing the licensing laws. Few persons realise how difficult it is to secure convictions. People as a rule will not give evidence, but will anonymously or under a *nom de plume* write complaining that the police do not do their duty. Here again I say, if there is such a wholesale breaking of the law as is by some people asserted, why do not those people come forward and lay an information, or inform the police, and give evidence on an information laid by the police? But they will do neither.

8. The system of recruiting from the public as well as from the Permanent Militia is working satisfactorily, and there is, of course, a much larger number to select from. I alluded in my last report to the fact that some of the older members of the Force had passed the age of activity required for policemen, and to the hardship that would be entailed if these men were turned adrift, as no superannuation scheme exists; and, as men are being taken on without previous training, it has occurred to me that a scheme somewhat as follows would prove practicable, and would furnish the necessary training for recruits, and at the same time provide for the older men alluded to—viz., that the station at Wellington should be a *dépôt*. Recruits, on joining, should be taken on probation for a period of three months, during which time they should be instructed not only in the necessary drill and their outdoor work, but by means of lectures on various matters which it is necessary, to be efficient, they should know. At the end of their probation period, if their conduct and qualifications were satisfactory, they would be taken on permanently, and then could be drafted where required. The older men who have passed their prime should be stationed in Wellington, and the recruits would join them in their daily work, so that whilst the elder men taught the younger and supplied experience, the younger would, while learning their duties, be able to render their elder comrades the necessary assistance in strength and activity required to efficiently perform police duty. The fact that there is a police-station at Mount Cook would facilitate the training of probationers, for towards the end of the probation term the recruits might, by being sent to that station, where they would, whilst still under *dépôt* control, have at times to act more on their own responsibility, prove their fitness to enter the Force. The Crown owns ground adjoining that station, and it would, I think, be money well spent if married quarters were erected there, where the older constables could reside.

9. The use of an athletic training for the police is generally recognised, and the streets of Wellington have more than once proved its value during the past year. It was found, however, in the past that if the constables were allowed to take part in athletic teams, the interference with their police duty resulting therefrom was unendurable. But at Mount Cook Barracks, adjacent to the police-station, is a good gymnasium, which would be available, and the good that would result from such training would be incalculable. Apart from the mere question of acquiring strength and activity, the knowledge of how to effectively and at the same time humanely deal with a violent and possibly half-mad prisoner is most necessary—not only in the interest of the arresting constable, but also in that of the prisoner himself.

10. It must be borne in mind that the police in New Zealand perform duties such as Clerks of Courts, bailiffs, gatherers of statistics, Inspectors of Factories, Probation Officers, Rangers, &c., that in other countries fall on the shoulders of specially-appointed officials. That the men are able to perform these duties speaks volumes for their intelligence, especially when it is remembered how few opportunities a constable in a country district has of increasing his knowledge. The question of giving members of the Force the means of acquiring information as to the state of the law and trend of judicial decisions has not been lost sight of, and I publish in the *Police Gazette* notes of decisions of the superior Courts, both in England and this colony, bearing on crime or other matters of importance to the police.

11. Extracts from the annual reports of Inspectors in charge of districts are attached, and a perusal of them will be found interesting.

12. A return is attached showing the proportion of police to population, and cost of police per head, in each of the Australasian Colonies.

13. Criminal statistics for the year ending the 31st December, 1896, show an increase of 663 in the total number of all offences reported in the colony. The principal increases are: Arson, 19; assaults, common, 22; assaults, indecent, 10; assaults on police, 12; breaches of the peace, 24; deserting and failing to provide for wives and children, 108; drunkenness, 369; indecent exposure and behaviour, 12; keeping disorderly houses and brothels, 8; lunacy, 13; neglected and criminal children, 31; obstructing and resisting police, 38; rape, 4; smuggling, 9; stowing away on board ships, 12; theft undescribed, 97; theft of sheep, 11; theft from the person, 11; vagrancy, 5. Other offences have decreased, as follows: Abortion, 5; assaults occasioning bodily harm, 7; assaults and robbery, 18; burglary, breaking into shops, dwellings, &c., 112; coinage offences, 7; cruelty to animals, 8; cruelty to children, 7; embezzlement, 9; false pretences, 13; forgery and uttering, 8; gaming offences, 13; illegally on premises, 25; malicious injury to property, 35; murder, 10; obscene and profane language, 5; obstructing railway-lines, 4; perjury, 7; sly-grog selling, 14; theft as bailee, 27; theft of cattle and horses, 9; theft from dwellings, 85; theft by servants, 15.

14. From time to time statements have been published that candidates are enrolled in the Force without proper inquiries being made as to their character and previous history. Now, during the past year 66 recruits have joined the Force—viz., Permanent Militiamen 16, and civilians 50. In the cases of the former, their conduct and bearing during their service in the Permanent Force, and while (as in most cases) they had been doing temporary police duty, were taken into consideration, while the civilians were specially selected by yourself from a long list of applicants, on the recommendations of reliable persons, and their histories for the last two or three years were carefully investigated.