

It is absolutely necessary for efficient police supervision that the beats should not be too large, and that they should be occupied, and to secure this there ought to be a reserve of at least ten men and one sergeant at each of the four chief towns; and to meet the requirements of the smaller towns and country districts not less than ten additional men should be at the disposal of the Commissioner to be located as he may deem advisable. There are some suburban districts with from five hundred to a thousand inhabitants having no constable within miles of them.

The detectives in the Force are fairly capable men, but their number at some stations is insufficient.

Infirm Members.

There are in the Force aged and infirm men who have reached the stage at which they are no longer efficient, but who are apparently retained because those in command of them have been unwilling to take action which would result in their being removed from a position on which they depend for their living. The regulation, No. 10, by which officers were required to retire at the age of sixty-five, and other members of the Force at sixty, having been revoked in 1888, retirement at a given age is not now compulsory, and in the absence of any retiring-allowance men hold to their office as long as possible. A compassionate allowance is made in cases of men declared by a medical Board unfit to be retained in the Force, and also under some special circumstances, but no right to it exists.

Comparative Strength in Australian Colonies.

The proportion of police to population in this colony, compared with that of the neighbouring colonies, as exhibited in the following table, gives weight to our opinion that the Force in this colony is below efficient strength:—

New Zealand	...	...	...	...	...	1 to 1,435
South Australia	...	...	...	...	...	1 " 1,100
New South Wales	...	...	...	...	...	1 " 702
Victoria	...	...	...	...	...	1 " 833
Queensland	...	...	...	...	...	1 " 578
Western Australia	...	...	...	...	...	1 " 335

From the figures given of the strength of the Force from 1891 to 1898 it will be seen that the number of sergeants was gradually reduced from sixty-two in 1891 to forty-five in 1897.

Promotions.

The return of promotions, which will be found in the Appendix, shows that during the years 1891 to 1897 only one constable was raised to the rank of sergeant, while promotion from class to class was very slow. In some cases promotion was barred by records upon the constable's defaulter's sheet of trivial offences committed many years before, the result of inquiries conducted in a manner which placed the constable at a great disadvantage. The effect of this has been to greatly discourage the men, produce discontent, and reduce to a minimum the *esprit* of the Force.

Transfers.

While there has been so little promotion, there have been necessarily many transfers from station to station, many of which were not acceptable to the men concerned, while others had been eagerly sought for.

Outside Offices.

Many offices under the Government and local bodies which impose duties outside those of a police officer are held by constables at out-stations, the emoluments of which vary considerably, as do also the conveniences and expenses of life at different stations; consequently strong efforts are made to secure the better stations, success in the obtaining of which gives rise to jealousy and dissatisfaction, founded on a suspicion that unfair means have been resorted to to obtain them.

The holding of these offices puts the constable in the position of having to serve many masters, while the work interferes at times with his police duties. These offices are as follows:—