

were distributed as follows: Auckland District, 18; Christchurch, 16; Dunedin, 8; Wellington, 7; Wanganui, 3; and Westland and Napier 1 each.

There were ten prosecutions under the Act during the year, resulting in nine convictions, as against twenty-four prosecutions and sixteen convictions during the preceding year; and five licenses were cancelled, as against three in 1898.

Periodical inspection proved that the homes were kept clean and tidy, and that the infants were well cared for.

CONDUCT OF MEMBERS OF THE FORCE.

The improvement mentioned in my last report in the conduct of the men is still maintained. During the year four constables were convicted of offences in connection with drink, and three of these are no longer in the Force. These four men all had considerable service, and three had previously served in the Armed Constabulary or Permanent Militia.

I am pleased to be able to state that, with about two exceptions, the young men who have been taken into the Force during the past eighteen months direct from private life, and who have passed through the training depot, are most abstemious and well conducted generally, and are a credit to the youth of the colony from which they have been drawn. Those to whom the exceptions apply are steady enough, but are inclined to be lazy, and need being kept up to their work.

The improved accommodation, especially in Auckland, provided for the unmarried men is also having a marked influence on the men, who are now able to keep their sleeping dormitories neat and tidy, and these habits of tidiness, which can now be enforced, are apparent in the men themselves, who when outside the barracks have a smarter and cleaner appearance. It has been the endeavour of the Inspectors and myself to make the barracks as home-like as possible, and, as an instance of how much this is appreciated by the men, I need only mention that in Auckland they have provided themselves with a billiard-table and fittings, costing considerably over £100.

THE TRAINING DEPOT.

The training depot still continues to work satisfactorily, and the effect on the men who have passed through it is very marked. It will, however, soon become necessary to erect a separate building for this depot, as owing to the rapid extension of the Newtown portion of Wellington the whole of Mount Cook Police-station will, at no distant date, be required for the use of the men performing duty in that district.

"THE POLICE PROVIDENT FUND ACT, 1899."

The passing of this measure last session has given the utmost satisfaction to the Force generally, although many of the men feel that the deductions are heavier than they can well afford.

Out of 220 members of the Force who could have remained outside the Act under section 24, only eight availed themselves of their right to do so, the remainder having elected to come under the Act.

It is, of course, too early to offer an opinion as to whether or not the fund will need material assistance from the Government in years to come; but owing to the men not having so far availed themselves to any great extent of their right to retire under section 13, the financial position of the fund is at present much better than was anticipated when the measure was before Parliament last session. On the 31st March last, after being in operation four months, there was a balance of £3,256 17s. 5d. to the credit of the fund, and this did not include the March deductions, amounting to about £550. Up to the date named the Government had saved the sum of £964 5s. in the form of compassionate allowances, which would no doubt have been paid had the fund not existed.

UNIFORMS.

One of the principal recommendations, so far as the men are concerned, of the recent Royal Commission—namely, that the police be provided with uniforms free—has not been adopted. I again strongly recommend that at least the men be provided with waterproofs, overcoats, and shakos free of cost. To grant this privilege would not involve a very serious increased expenditure, and it would give immense satisfaction. I find the employes of the Postal and Telegraph, Railways, and Prisons Departments, and Government messengers, are provided with the whole of their uniforms free; and under these circumstances it seems difficult to understand why the police should not receive similar treatment.

INSPECTORS' REPORTS.

Extracts from the annual reports of the officers in charge of districts are annexed. They contain nothing calling for special remark.

STATIONS, ETC.

The following new buildings have been completed since my last report, namely: Auckland—Offices, barracks for single men, quarters for two married men, and stable. Wellington (Lambton Quay)—Cells, mess-room, and cook's kitchen. Newtown, or Wellington South—Two-cell lock-up. Christchurch—Sub-Inspector's residence, and cells. Thames—Sergeants' quarters. Cambridge—Station. Mokau—Station. Bluff—Constables' quarters. Rāhōtu—Lock-up. Tokaanu—Lock-up. Tūporoa—Lock-up.

The following new buildings are in course of erection: Gisborne—Sergeant's office, and quarters for married and single men; Fielding—Station; Invercargill—Station, and barracks for