

1901
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 MINISTER of JUSTICE.

SIR,—

Police Department, Commissioner's Office, 7th May, 1901.

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 last.

STRENGTH OF FORCE.

On the 31st March last the strength of the Force was 591 of all ranks, being an increase of 5 during the year. The total is made up as follows: Inspectors, 7; Sub-Inspectors, 4; sergeants-major, 2; sergeants, 54; constables, 504; detectives, 20. In addition to above, there were 4 police surgeons, 4 matrons, 20 district constables, 7 Native constables, and 86 horses.

For particulars of the ages, length of service, &c., of members of the Force, see appendices A, B, C, and D.

STATIONS.

New stations have been formed at Kaitaia, Mount Roskill Road (Auckland), Taihape, and Nightcaps, and district constables have been appointed at Hohoura and Panmure.

AUGMENTATIONS.

Augmentations have been made at: Auckland, 3; Gisborne, 1; Wanganui, 2; Wellington, 2; Manners Street, 1; Mount Cook, 1; Wellington South, 1; Reefton, 1; Cromwell, 1; and Gore, 1.

CASUALTIES.

The casualties (Appendix G) have been: Retired under the Police Provident Fund Act, 10; resigned, 12; died, 3; transferred to Justice Department, 1; transferred to Permanent Militia, 1; and services dispensed with, 2: total, 29. This is one less than in the preceding year.

CRIMINAL STATISTICS.

These statistics (Appendix E), which include all offences reported, are made up for the year ended 31st December last, and show an aggregate increase of 1,493 over the figures of the preceding year.

The principal increases are: Absconding from industrial schools, 25; assaults, indecent, 13; assault and robbery, 23; breaches of the peace, 140; deserting and failing to provide for wives and children, 104; deserting merchant vessels, 66; disturbing meetings and congregations, 27; drunkenness, 1,010; illegally on premises, 32; indecent exposure and behaviour, 20; lunacy, 48; malicious injury to property, 81; sly-grog selling, 91; sureties of the peace, 28; theft of cattle and horses, 19; theft by servants, 30; and vagrancy, 23.

The principal decreases are: Abusive and threatening language, 30; disobeying orders of Court, 29; failing to support parents and near relatives, 26; false declarations, 39; false pretences, 46; gaming offences, 65; neglected and criminal children, 36; obstructing and resisting police, 23; theft undescribed, 26; theft from dwellings, 29; and trespass, 57.

REMARKS ON CRIMINAL STATISTICS.

The increase of 1,493 on the year, compared with the increases of the years 1897, 1898, and 1899, which were 546, 1,159, and 487 respectively, appears at first sight to be somewhat startling; but, as this increase is practically made up by the increases in the number of breaches of the peace (140), deserting and failing to provide for wives and children (104), deserting merchant vessels (66), disturbing meetings and congregations (27), drunkenness (1,010), lunacy (48), and sly-grog selling (91)—total, 1,486—all of which are offences of a light character, and come within the category of unpreventable offences, it does not reflect on the efficiency of the Police Force.

The best criterion of the efficiency or otherwise of a Police Force is the fall or rise respectively in the number of preventable offences, such as thefts of various kinds, burglary, housebreaking,