

refused on the last licensing day, and many others who have applied for new licenses have been treated in a similar manner. This, no doubt, will occasion a large increase in the number of "sly grog" sellers, and I think some provision should be made for the suppression of such an offence. The ordinary police are quite unfit to grapple with it, as they will not be supplied with liquor while in uniform, and to compel them to go in disguise for such a purpose would reduce their efficiency as peace officers, as by so doing they would lose the confidence of the public, who, whether rightly or wrongly, have the utmost abhorrence for "sly grog" informers.

In the Colony of Victoria a similar difficulty was got over by the appointment of a number of men under the charge of the Chief Inspector of Distilleries, who sent them from one district to another as their services were required.

The want of a prison van has long been felt here. The prisoners, who generally number from six to eight, are forced at present to walk from the Court House to the Gaol, a distance little short of two miles, through a most populous part of the city, and being generally of the most degraded of both sexes, they present a most pitiable appearance. During the winter months, when it rains almost every day, they never reach the Gaol without getting thoroughly drenched.

Owing to the smallness of the force, the men who are engaged on night duty in the city, that is from 9 p.m. till 5 a.m., eight hours, are compelled to escort these prisoners, a duty which takes at least two hours, in addition to that they had already performed. To obviate this, I have set down a sum in the accompanying estimate for the purchase of a van, horse, and harness. This conveyance would also be of service in the removal of persons committed to the Lunatic Asylum, and of those who suddenly fall ill in the streets, and have to be sent to the Hospital at Government expense. These services cost at least £50 a year at present.

Since the time I first assumed charge of this district, I have repeatedly brought under the notice of the authorities the necessity of increasing the police force. I have shown that the number of men employed is only about half the strength of the Otago force, and perhaps equal to that of Canterbury. I have repeatedly stated that, in the year 1868, when there were only two constables stationed at the Thames, and when the population of the Province was 48,000, the strength of the force was 45 of all ranks; while at the present time, with a population of 62,000, or 14,000 increase, the entire strength is only 44. From the return of the distribution of this force, which I attach, will be seen that, although nominally four men are engaged on city duty at night time, and two for each relief during the day, it rarely happens that more than three constables are employed on night duty; and to enable me to post so many, one and sometimes two men have to be detached from day duty. This is occasioned by the illness of constables, often from injuries received in the discharge of their duty, or by the absence of others upon duty in the country. Upon a late occasion, there were two constables ill at the same time, and two others absent upon duty at Dunedin.

In the Southern Provinces and the adjoining colonies, mounted constables are stationed in outlying districts for the protection of settlers, while here there are only special constables, who receive £20 per annum, and are entirely ignorant of their duties. The effect of this is, that the city police have to take upon themselves the arrest and prosecution of country criminals, a duty which occupies the constant attention of one or two constables.

In consequence of the paucity of constables, duties requiring particular care and attention are often not performed in a satisfactory manner, owing to the men being called away to attend to others more pressing; and municipal by-laws do not receive that degree of observance their importance deserves.

In the estimate I submit, I have provided for four additional constables for city duty; and, if efficiency were the only object I had in view, would have also asked for an increase in the country police.

Within the last few months the Coromandel Gold Feld has improved largely. The township has increased to treble its former size, buildings are still being erected in every direction, and the place promises to become as permanent as the Thames itself. Two constables have been stationed at Coromandel for the last eighteen months, but the field has now become of so much importance that a 1st class sergeant should be at once placed in charge, and a constable added to the strength of the station. I have provided for the extra cost in the attached estimate. I have also set down the pay of the sergeant-major and detectives at 10s. per day, instead of their present salary, which appears to me far too small, when taking into consideration the great expense these officers are put to in searching for information, and the superior qualities required in such situations. The duties of a detective officer require talents of a peculiar order, in addition to which there is the difficulty of finding candidates who possess a taste for that peculiar duty, and any person who does not possess both qualifications is comparatively useless as a detective. In Otago and Canterbury such officers receive 11s. and 12s. per day, while here they only get 8s., although in no place in New Zealand are the services of efficient detectives more urgently required, in consequence of its being the first and last port for American mails. I have likewise added a small sum to the votes under the headings, "Conveyance of Prisoners" and "Travelling Expenses of Constables," as I find that the sums voted for these services will be largely exceeded during the current year.

In concluding this report, it affords me great pleasure to be able to state that a marked improvement in the efficiency of the constabulary is becoming more apparent every year. Very few constables now appear before their officers for offences, and when they do, the charges are generally of a trivial kind. The fines inflicted for the last twelve months would not altogether amount to £5, while the awards granted would at least quadruple that sum. The improvement in the men of this station is owing in a great measure to the untiring efforts of Senior Sergeant Parry, who has been most indefatigable at all times, and to the other sergeants of the district. The detectives have not been behindhand in their efforts for the suppression of crime; and the constables have shown a zeal for the force, without which their services are of little avail. Indeed, the one thing only required to raise the standard of the force to the level of other police establishments is the formation of a superannuation fund, for the benefit of those who are compelled to leave the service, in consequence of injuries received in the discharge of their duties, or from old age.

I have, &c.,

The Commissioner, Armed Constabulary Force.

T. BROHAM, Inspector.