

Enclosure 1 in No. 1.

Superintendent SHEARMAN to the Hon. the COMMISSIONER, New Zealand Constabulary.

New Zealand Constabulary Depôt, Wellington,

31st May, 1879.

SIR,—

In reply to your letter of the 7th May, No. 352, I have the honor to forward the following report showing the state of the police in the North Island, where employed, and how far they have been successful in preventing and detecting crime.

The officers have shown unusual zeal for the service and ability in conducting the many onerous duties devolving on them; they have been willingly and well assisted by the sergeants; and the constables, with few exceptions, have given the utmost satisfaction. All grades have provided themselves with clothing according to the uniform pattern. The mounted division of the force is supplied with carbines, revolvers, and ammunition; and the foot with batons. The house accommodation is indifferent throughout, though improving; there are some buildings in course of erection, and others contemplated. The officers, with two exceptions, are without quarters. Complete records for future reference have been introduced at the several stations. Steps have been taken to place the members of the force in a position to make themselves acquainted with the laws of the country. The police in districts where the population is scattered are still, in many instances, without horses to enable them to move about with facility, make themselves acquainted with the community, roads, and tracks, and to prevent and detect crime. Members of the force are employed, in some instances, as gaolers, bailiffs, clerks to the Bench, poundkeepers, dog registrars, rent collectors for Immigration Department, immigration officers, distributors of charitable aid, and inspectors of nuisances, thereby subverting the discipline of the service, failing, as a rule, to give satisfaction in any capacity, and increasing the cost of the department.

The tabular form attached, marked A, will show the total strength, 212, exclusive of men employed as gaolers, and 88 police stations. Taking the population to be 220,897 it will give one member of the force to every 1,041 of the population, and the cost of maintenance will be 3s. 7d. per head per annum. Stations have been established during the current period in the following places:—Newtown, Wellington; Awanui, Kopua, Tolago Bay, and Woodville, Hawke's Bay; Whakatane, Tauranga, Paeroa and Wangaroa, Auckland; and Halcombe, Wanganui. Others have been authorized at Waipukurau, Hawke's Bay; Katikati and Maketu, Tauranga; Warkworth, Auckland; and Stratford, Taranaki. The present expenditure in many places where stations are established would be sufficient to meet the requirements of a much larger population: with the increase of numbers there will be a proportionate decrease of cost. Permanent reductions on the cost of maintenance could be effected in forage by providing paddocks for use of the department.

The Offences Return for 1877, marked B, shows that 6,059 offences came to the knowledge of the police: 205 were committed for trial, 4,853 summarily convicted, 747 discharged, and 5,805 prosecuted, leaving 254 offences undetected. In 1878, 6,726 reported, 184 committed, 5,241 summarily convicted, 910 discharged, 6,335 prosecuted, 391 undetected; showing, for 1878, 667 more offences known to police, 21 less committed for trial, 388 more summary convictions, 163 more discharged, 530 more prosecuted, and 137 more undetected. The apparent increase is to be attributed to additional population, also a more correct system of recording crime, and is principally confined to minor offences. The cases committed for trial before the Supreme Court number 21 less than for the previous year.

In the future much can be done to prevent crime by the members of the force making themselves acquainted with all classes of the community, their places of abode, the habits and means of subsistence of possible criminals and the criminal class, possessing a thorough knowledge of the roads, tracks, and by-ways, visiting places frequently at uncertain times, and being always ready for any emergency. Certainty of detection and speedy punishment have a powerful influence to prevent and deter the criminal class and those who would otherwise drift into habits of crime. It is a well-known fact that people who live by dishonest means will discover and select the places where they can ply their calling with least hindrance and to the best advantage.

The Ordinances in force in the various provincial districts for the managing of towns and other populous places are dissimilar, meagre, and ill-adapted for present requirements. I beg to submit it would improve the efficiency of the police, contribute to the safety, good order, and comfort of the community, and be the means of introducing many advantages, to repeal the whole and have a comprehensive Act passed similar to the ones now in force in most of the other colonies.

The provisions of an Act for preventing the adulteration of food or drugs, and selling or exhibiting for sale adulterated or unwholesome food or drugs, can only, under the existing law, be enforced by Inspectors of Nuisances or Inspectors of Weights and Measures: where there are no persons holding such appointments the Act ceases to take effect; and Wellington and Auckland are the only places where there are legally-appointed analysts. I respectfully beg to submit that the Act be amended, and similar powers to those held by Inspectors of Nuisances and Weights and Measures be extended to the police; that persons selling or exhibiting for sale be compelled, on demand, to sell, at the current rates, any articles of consumption; and that an analyst be appointed for each of the large towns, principally to check that nefarious and growing evil of adulterating liquors, thus tending to reduce the number of inmates in lunatic asylums, and protecting the revenue from fraud.

I have, &c.,

R. C. SHEARMAN,

Superintendent in Charge of North Island Police.

The Hon. the Commissioner of
Armed Constabulary, Wellington.