

1888.
NEW ZEALAND.

NEW ZEALAND POLICE FORCE

(ANNUAL REPORT ON THE).

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

The COMMISSIONER of POLICE to the Hon. the DEFENCE MINISTER.

SIR,—

Commissioner's Office, Wellington, 3rd May, 1888.

I have the honour to submit for your information a report on the Police Force, with statistics, for year ending the 31st March, 1888.

On that date the police shows a strength of 487, as against 502 in 1887 and 494 in 1886, not including 21 Native constables at small salaries and 13 district constables at rates varying from £10 to £100 per annum, being an increase of five in this branch of the service. These men are stationed at Taupo, Hokianga, Nelson, and in Wellington (2), and are for the most part transfers from the Permanent Militia.

A new district has been formed at the Bay of Islands, under Inspector McGovern. This step was rendered necessary by the large amount of sly grog-selling in that district, and the belief, more or less well founded, that smuggling has been carried on to a large extent. The result has been most satisfactory, as will be shown when dealing with the offences for the year.

The retirement of four Inspectors in consequence of retrenchment in the Government service has enabled me to effect the amalgamation of several districts, as follows: Kawhia, Waikato, and Tauranga have been placed under Inspector Goodall, Inspector Kiely being transferred to Napier, *vice* Inspector Bullen. The County of Thames has been detached from Tauranga District and added to Auckland under Inspector Broham, *vice* Inspector Shearman, who retires. Wanganui and Taranaki have been joined and placed under Inspector Pardy, Inspector James retiring. Lawrence has been added to Dunedin, and Timaru joined to Oamaru, under Inspector Thompson. Inspector Moore, from Lawrence, has taken charge of Southland, Inspector Buckley retiring.

Four new police-stations have been opened during the past year, viz., Waipu, Taupo, Hunterville, and Ashurst. The latter station, however, is merely temporary, and depends on the continuance of the Gorge railway-works.

It has been deemed necessary to increase the strength of the police at each of the following stations: Auckland, 2; Russell, 2; Te Awamutu, 1; Wellington, 3; and it will further be necessary to form a small reserve of trained men, to be stationed in Wellington and used as necessity may dictate. Reductions have, on the other hand, been made in the strength of police at Opotiki (1), Hamilton West (3), Wanganui (2), Manaia (1), Greymouth (1), Brunnerton (1), Kaiapoi (1), Lawrence (1), Queenstown (1), Masterton (1), and at Kawhia 2.

The stations below mentioned have been closed, either as being no longer required, or as being a source of expense to the country without adequate benefit in return: Alexandra North, Paikariki, Macrae's, Waimea, Rimu, Boatman's, Portobello, and Ravensbourne.

During the past year the casualties in the Police Force have been 28, as against 33 and 24 in the two previous years, viz., by superannuation, 3; retirements on reduction, 4 Inspectors; resignations, 13; discharges, 3; dismissals, 3; deaths, 2.

The criminal statistics for the year ending the 31st December, 1887, show a very satisfactory diminution in the more serious offences (schedule attached), such as murder, attempted murder, arson, manslaughter, forgery, and horse- and cattle-stealing, and fewer cases of larceny have occurred. The year has, however, been specially noticeable for a marked decrease in the offence of drunkenness, the number of cases being 842 less than in the previous year. Much the same may be said of wife-desertion, which, at one time, bade fair to become a common offence. The decrease in this criminal item is, I think, fairly attributable to the prompt measures taken for the arrest and enforced return of men who had fled to the adjoining colonies during the same period.

The actual decrease in crime throughout the colony has been 393 cases as compared with last year, viz., a decrease of 747 cases in the South Island, and an increase of 364 in the North Island. So far the balance is in favour of the former, but in that Island there has been an increase in many of the serious offences, while in the North they have decreased, notwithstanding that the minor offences have increased.