

the Police. By means of the careful descriptions taken, many bodies were identified by relatives and friends, while all valuables found were handed over to the agent for the Public Trustee. To say this unusual and trying duty was commendably carried out by this party of Police conveys no adequate idea of what they had to go through. When it is considered that the scene of the disaster is as far north as the Great Barrier, that it was the middle of summer, and that many of the bodies were not recovered or exhumed till ten days or a fortnight after the disaster, some faint idea can be formed of the exceptional and horrible nature of the duty carried out day and night, in a foul and dangerous atmosphere, on scant rations; yet there was no grumbling or complaints, and persons who visited the island while the work was going on testify to the kind, humane, and sympathetic manner in which these trying duties were performed. The directors of the Union Steamship Company were also pleased to express their high appreciation of the work done by this department in connection with that lamentable disaster.

12. On the 29th April, 1894, Inspector Hickson and fourteen constables, with twenty men from the Permanent Militia in Auckland, proceeded to Paeroa, on the Upper Thames, where a dispute had arisen between the Ngatikei and Ngatiwhaki sections of the Hauraki Natives over the possession of a gravel-pit; and there is little doubt that but for the prompt appearance and interference of this armed force on the scene there would have been bloodshed, but, owing to the bold stand made by Inspector Hickson, acting under your instructions, both parties were speedily disarmed, a peaceful solution of the dispute was arrived at in a very brief space of time, the Police and Permanent Militia were back in Auckland within a week of leaving there, and I am happy to say there has been no renewal of the quarrel since. Good service has also been rendered by the Police and Permanent Militia recently in protecting surveyors and the unemployed in surveys and road-making through the Urewera country, on both the Whakatane and Galatea sides; but these duties are not yet completed, and the men are still in camp at Te Waite.

13. The criminal statistics for the past year show an increase of 365 in the total number of all offences reported in the colony during the year, as compared with the previous twelve months. The principal increases are: Assaults (indecent), 11; bankruptcy offences, 34; breaches of the peace, 87; burglary, breaking into shops, &c., 134; carnally knowing, or attempting to know, girls, 9; cattle-maiming, 8; concealment of birth, 9; deserting and failing to provide for wives and children, 138; disorderly conduct, 73; false pretenses, 34; forgery and uttering, 35; gaming offences, 20; illegally on premises, 27; indecent exposure, 15; keeping disorderly houses and brothels, 34; malicious injury to property, 43; murder, 4; neglected and criminal children, 34; obstructing and resisting police, 48; perjury, 18; rape, 11; sheep-stealing, 12; theft (undescribed), 54; theft from dwellings, 159. Other crimes have decreased as follows: Arson, 4; assaults occasioning bodily harm, 24; assaults on police, 9; conspiring to defraud, 8; cruelty to animals, 7; drunkenness, 657; embezzlement, 17; failing to support near relatives, 31; lunacy, 31; murder (attempted), 3; obscene and profane language, 61; obstructing railway-lines, 10; sly grog-selling, 21; horse-stealing, 21; vagrancy, 34.

14. A return is attached showing the proportion of police to population, and cost of police per inhabitant, in each of the Australian Colonies.

15. Extracts from the annual reports of Inspectors in charge of districts are attached, and a perusal of them will be found interesting.

16. It affords me much pleasure to record in this official report an act of devotion to duty on the part of Constable Costin, of Culverden Station. This constable was dispatched to search for a man who was lost during the recent terrible snow-storms. He was nearly snowed up himself, but struggled on, and succeeded in recovering the body of the unfortunate man who had succumbed to the cold and exposure. I also draw attention to the gallant conduct of a civilian friend of the constable's, Mr. Gilbert Gordon, who insisted on accompanying him on his perilous journey.

17. As regards baby-farming, commented upon in my report for 1893, recent events have clearly proved that there were good and sufficient grounds for recommending that an Infant Life Protection Act should be placed on the statute-book of the colony. In the now notorious Dean case it was found that there are certain defects in the Act which, as pointed out by Inspector Pardy, require to be amended. I have already brought these matters to your notice. The conduct and energy of the Police in tracing out and bringing to justice the baby-farmer already referred to is worthy of commendation, and all who were engaged in getting up the case deserve the thanks of the community for bringing their work to a satisfactory conclusion.

18. In conclusion, it may be stated that one of the main objects aimed at in the administration of the department has been to bring the Police in closer touch with the people, and thereby establish a system of confidence and reliance on each other. In meeting deputations of Prohibitionists and others I have endeavoured to impress upon my hearers that in such work unity is strength, and that if they and the department could only unite their labours, and feel that such desirable confidence was thoroughly established, much good must result. In many instances the desired end has been arrived at, but from recent events in Christchurch it would appear that the mere mention of the department to what is known there as the Prohibition party can only be compared to the simile of holding out a red rag to a bull. The reason for this seems quite inexplicable, and it is hoped in future that that party will take the department into their confidence and work together for the one common cause—the better carrying-out of the liquor-laws. There seems no apparent reason why the Police and every section of the community should not work hand-in-hand in endeavouring to maintain law and order. I feel it my duty, before closing this report, to point out that in order to maintain efficiency it is necessary that some of the older sergeants and constables should be retired, as from age, infirmities, and perhaps former associations, they are now unable to efficiently carry out the duties demanded of them according to present-day requirements; but, owing to their being no retiring-scheme in force, if permitted, they will hamper the Force by continuing to serve for some years longer.