

It appears scarcely necessary that the attention of a Minister of the Crown should be occupied with the internal arrangements of the Police Force, and we submit with all deference that in our opinion the Commissioner of Police, while controlled by the Minister as to expenditure and responsible to him, should have absolute authority as to all appointments, promotions, transfers, dismissals, and distribution of the Force.

The Commissioner of Police, to be intrusted with the powers we are proposing, should be a man of police experience and qualified for the office, and we are of opinion that in the present Commissioner of Police the colony has an officer admirably suited for the position.

Mr. Tunbridge, the present Commissioner, having attended the sittings of the Commission throughout the colony, has had an opportunity of forming an estimate of the individual character of a majority of the members of the Force, and of becoming acquainted with their various grievances and aspirations for the benefit of the body to which they belong, which must be of great value to him.

Districts.

A map showing the police districts will be found in the Appendix.

We recommend that the boundaries of the Districts of Nelson and Westland should be altered so as to include that portion of Marlborough now forming part of the Wellington District, and that the headquarters of the district should be at Nelson instead of Greymouth, as at present; and that Kawhia, which is at present included in the Wanganui District, should form part of the Auckland District, and that the headquarters of the Wanganui District should be removed from New Plymouth to Wanganui. We are informed that the Wanganui headquarters was established at New Plymouth in consequence of Native troubles in the neighbourhood of Parihaka, but no reason appears to your Commissioners for the continuance of that arrangement. We consider that Palmerston North and the present out-stations adjacent thereto, all which now form a part of the Wellington District, might well be added to the Wanganui District. The City of Wellington, with its rapidly increasing population and its other out-stations, will furnish full employment for the Inspector, sergeants, and men of that district. The alterations now proposed will, in our opinion, conduce to the more efficient working of the districts affected by them.

The districts of Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch, and Dunedin each cover a very large area, and the duty of visiting the numerous out-stations necessitates frequent and, occasionally, long absence of the Inspector from headquarters. At such times the local charge is shared by a sergeant and the district clerk, although he may rank only as a constable. This is inevitably attended with loss of discipline and efficiency.

Sub-Inspectors.

With a view to remedy this, we suggest the appointment of a class of Sub-Inspectors, at a salary of £250, one of whom should be stationed in each of those districts. These officers would be qualified and fitted to inspect the out-stations or take charge of headquarters in the absence of the Inspector, and would be available for relief duty in cases of emergency.

Sub-Districts.

We are aware that Mr. Commissioner Tunbridge has initiated a system of sub-districts, each comprising several out-stations, each sub-district to be under the charge of a sergeant. We strongly advise that this system should be carried out throughout the colony. It appears to us a convenient way of securing the frequent inspection of out-stations, without which no satisfactory discipline and efficiency can be secured.

Retirements.

For the sake of the efficiency of the Force it is desirable that the retirement of constables and sergeants at the age of sixty years should be compulsory, and of Inspectors at the age of sixty-five years unless specially requested to retain office.

We do not consider it necessary or advisable that we should name the constables or sergeants whose services we consider should be dispensed with on this ground. The Commissioner of Police, having accompanied us on our journey through the colony, personally inspected the men, and heard all the evidence adduced, is in a position to do this, and we recommend that his opinion be acted upon in the matter.