

dog-tax from them. Their attitude became so threatening, and created so much alarm, that a force of Permanent Artillery and police had to be sent to arrest the ringleaders, who were subsequently convicted at the Supreme Court, and sentenced to various terms of imprisonment.

The crime of theft is very prevalent among boys and young men in Auckland. At the present time there are ten young men and boys, whose ages range from fifteen to twenty, who are awaiting trial at the Supreme Court on charges of housebreaking, theft, and forgery.

There is urgent need of a law to compel second-hand dealers to be licensed in the same way as pawnbrokers are now licensed. The latter, before they can obtain licenses, must be recommended by at least five householders, as well as the local officer of police. They are also bound to keep proper books, which are always open to police inspection, and have to pay an annual license-fee of £10. The second-hand dealer, on the other hand, is subject to no such restrictions, and has to pay no fee, and may be one of the worst criminals in the community. Many of those dealers are noted receivers of stolen goods, and it is a well-known fact that most of the stolen property that gets into their hands is never recovered by the police. Compelling them to obtain licenses and keep proper books, which should be open to police inspection, would greatly assist in the prevention and detection of the crime of theft.

The granting of 1s. per diem as lodging-allowance to married constables of over three years' service, and a similar daily allowance to plain-clothes constables and police clerks, appears to have given satisfaction throughout this district. The abolition of class rank, and the substitution of payment by increment, has also given great satisfaction to the members of the Force of all ranks.

The appointment of a police surgeon is another matter that has given satisfaction to the Auckland City and suburban men, who appear to be well pleased with the gentleman appointed to the above position.

The want of a pension system is keenly felt by men of all ranks. Every man in the service is, I believe, quite willing to contribute a fair percentage of his salary towards the maintenance of a pension fund, which would make provision for members of the Force who, through age or impaired health, would be no longer fit for service. There are many men at present in the service who are unfit for active work owing to impaired health or advanced age, and who would retire immediately if they could obtain a small pension, but as they have nothing to look forward to on leaving the service except the usual year's salary as compensation they prefer to remain in the service as long as they can. A pension system would soon get rid of these men, and their places would be filled by younger and more active men.

The present system of compelling the men to provide their own uniform is anything but satisfactory, as the clothing they wear on duty is anything but uniform except in name. When the men fall in on parade one man appears in a new jumper and a half-worn and faded trousers and shako, while the men on either side of him may have new trousers and shako and a half-worn faded jumper. The appearance of a number of men on parade dressed as above described is anything but smart or tidy-looking.

The number of promotions in the service during the past fifteen months has had the effect of infusing a new spirit into all the good men in the Force, who now begin to realise that they have advancement to look forward to so long as they perform their duties in a conscientious, straightforward, and intelligent manner.

INSPECTOR F. MCGOVERN, NAPIER AND EAST COAST.

The annual offences return discloses the fact that 1,375 offences were reported during the year 1898, as against 1,242 in 1897, an increase of 133 cases for last year. Six serious crimes against the person were reported, two individuals being charged with causing the death of two infants, which were not proceeded with in the Magistrate's Court, an analysis having failed to trace poison in the bodies of the infants. In another case a Maori *tohunga* was charged with causing the death of another Maori in the Poverty Bay sub-district by such absurd and violent means as resulted in the death of the sick person under treatment. This case was sent for trial, but was thrown out in the Supreme Court. In the other instance a settler named Scott, living at Motu—a small settlement about sixty-five miles from Gisborne—was murdered in a cold-blooded way. After the lapse of a few days another settler of the same place committed suicide, and police inquiry resulted in sufficient evidence being obtained to point to this settler as being the murderer. The police engaged in this case had a very rough task on account of the isolated and very rough nature of the country, both bodies having to be brought down a considerable distance on pack-horses for an inquest to be held.

The other offences are of the average class and number. The largest increase is in that for drunkenness, 105 cases more than in 1897.

I arrived in Napier on transfer from New Plymouth on the 11th January last, and assumed charge of the Napier and East Coast district the following day, taking over charge from Inspector Emerson, whom I found confined to his bed dangerously ill. I found everything connected with the station in perfect order.

Two sub-districts have been formed—namely, Bay of Plenty and Dannevirke. The Poverty Bay sub-district has existed for some time past. These places are each worked under a sergeant with a number of stations under each control. The arrangement appears to answer admirably, and assists the Inspector to a great extent in the discharge of his duty.

INSPECTOR R. J. GILLIES, WANGANUI AND WEST COAST.

Sly-grog selling has been carried on to some extent in the outlying portions of the district—namely, Mokau, Raetihi, Moawhango, and Meremere, but owing to the vigorous action which has of late been taken by the police, and the substantial penalties imposed, I hope that sly-grog selling will soon be a thing of the past in this district.