

a Fourth Standard examination, in addition to answering a special set of questions appertaining solely to police matters, upon which they have been instructed. Unless they do pass this examination they are discharged from the depot.

The most common causes of failure to pass the medical examination are varicose veins in the legs and slight heart affections, both, no doubt, attributable in a great measure to over-exertion at football, cycling, and other athletic exercises.

POLICE PROVIDENT FUND.

The present state of the above-named fund is far more satisfactory than was anticipated when the Bill authorising its establishment was before Parliament in 1899.

During the year ended the 31st March last the receipts, including $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. interest on accumulated capital, amounted to £6,769 9s. 10d., the expenditure for same period being £840 14s. 11d., leaving a balance in favour of the fund on the year's working of £5,928 14s. 11d., which, added to the balance (£3,256 17s. 5d.) brought forward from the previous year, gave a total capital on the date named of £9,185 12s. 4d. To this amount can now be added the balance (about £850) in favour of the fund from the March and April contributions, thus making the present capital of the fund, after seventeen months' working, a little over £10,000. This very satisfactory result is largely owing to many members of the Force who are entitled to retire not thus far having availed themselves of their right to do so.

At present there are on the fund—one ex-Inspector, four ex-sergeants, and seven ex-constables; and the contributions, as provided by the Act, have been returned to seven members who have died, or for some reason have left the service.

Since the Act came into force the Government has saved the sum of £4,131 18s. 1d. in the form of compassionate allowances, which would, no doubt, have been paid had the fund not existed.

STATIONS, ETC.

The following new buildings have been completed during the year: Gisborne—Sergeant's quarters, office, and quarters for single men; Feilding—Station; Invercargill—Station and barracks; Nelson—Police gaol and Gaoler's quarters; Westport—Sergeant's quarters; Queens-town—Sergeant's quarters; Arrowtown—Station; Hamilton—Station and sergeant's quarters; Blenheim—Stable; Rangiora—Stable; Upper Hutt—Lock-up; and Cheviot—Lock-up.

Extensive repairs, additions, renovations, &c., have been carried out, or are at present in hand, at numerous other stations.

New stations are much required at Kihikihi, Mangaweka, Waiuku, Raglan, Te Awamutu, Ormondville, Denniston, Methven, Akaroa, and Waikouaiti; sergeants' quarters at Waihi, New Plymouth, Oamaru, and Gore; lock-up at Hawera; lock-up and stable at Kimbolton; washhouse and stable at Manaia; constable's quarters at Naseby; lock-up and stable at Invercargill; offices and lock-up at King Street, Dunedin; additional rooms for use of probationers, sergeant's quarters, and additional cells at Mount Cook; library and additional rooms at Lambton-quay.

STRENGTH AND DISTRIBUTION OF FORCE.

For strength and distribution of the Force see Appendix F.

Owing to the increase of population, especially in the four principal centres, the gradual opening-up of the back country by settlement, the close settlement of large estates, the great advance in the gold-dredging industry, and the increase of shipping at the various ports, continual demands are being made for the establishment of new police-stations, or an increase in the number of men at existing stations, and I consider an augmentation of two sergeants and fifteen constables is necessary to meet the legitimate demands of the public.

COST OF POLICE, ETC.

A return is herewith annexed (Appendix H) giving the proportion of police to population, and the cost of police per inhabitant, in each of the Australian States and in this colony, from which it will be seen that New Zealand has one policeman to every 1,381 of the population (against one to every 1,359 during the preceding year), at a cost of 2s. 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per head (against 2s. 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. during 1899); while the Australian States range from one policeman to every 1,030 of the population, at a cost of 4s. 2d. per head, in South Australia, to one policeman to 389 of the population, at a cost of 12s. 0 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per head, in Western Australia.

INSPECTORS' REPORTS.

Extracts from the annual reports of the Inspectors in charge of districts are annexed. There is nothing calling for special comment in those reports.

I have, &c.,

J. B. TUNBRIDGE,

Commissioner of Police.