

The first annual examination under the new regulations for members of the Force who wished to qualify for promotion was held in September last. Out of ninety non-commissioned officers and constables who presented themselves for examination, seventy-nine of this number passed. Some of the candidates obtained a total of nearly 90 per cent. of marks on their examination-papers. The Department has every right to feel highly gratified at the splendid results, and great credit is due to the men for the manner in which they acquitted themselves.

In March last a new scale of pay was introduced, which gives an all-round increase of 1s. per day as from the 1st April last. In addition to the increase of pay, non-commissioned officers and constables were also granted an allowance of £5 per annum to cover the cost of making up their uniforms and providing themselves with footwear. In addition to the material for uniform frocks and trousers, the following articles are issued to members of the Force: Blue cloth overcoat for night duty, blue waterproof overcoat, blue helmet, white helmet, and leggings (as required). The conditions under which the New Zealand police are now serving are better than those obtaining in any other police service in the Empire.

As the sum which the Department grants annually for house allowances to married members of the Force who are not provided with free quarters is steadily increasing year by year, I beg to suggest that the Government consider the advisability of erecting cottages for married men in all towns where the Department has suitable sites available for the purpose. There are a number of police-stations at which suitable quarters for married men have already been provided, and as the men occupying these quarters are consequently always at hand in cases of emergency the arrangement is very advantageous to the Department. Moreover, the men take much greater interest in their work when living near the station than they do when they have to tramp a mile or more to and from the station when coming on and going off duty.

For many years past the Government has been expending considerable sums of money in various localities in providing workers' homes, and I am of opinion that if a similar scheme applied to this Department could be carried out very satisfactory results would accrue. In providing workers' homes the land upon which the houses are erected has to be purchased, but this would not be necessary in the case of this Department, as there are ample Government sites lying idle in many towns. The total amount which the Department has paid in house allowances to members of the Force during the past ten years is £64,500, the annual expenditure under this heading having increased from £3,500 in 1904 to £10,280 last year.

A serious strike took place last October, and continued for several weeks, involving a large number of workers, and causing much loss to themselves as well as to their employers. The Department was forced to incur heavy expenditure in bringing extra police and special constables to the centres of disturbance to maintain order. The lawless element among the strikers in Wellington took advantage of the position to cause riots in various parts of the city. During the Taranaki Street riot a non-commissioned officer of the Permanent Defence Force was struck on the head with an iron bolt thrown by a rioter, and was so seriously injured that he is still unfit to resume duty. A mounted constable who was trying to prevent the Royal Tiger Hotel in Taranaki Street from being wrecked was also hit on the head with a missile, and has not yet been able to resume duty. Another constable was so seriously hurt in the riot which occurred in front of Messrs. Whitcombe and Tombs's shop, in Lambton Quay, that he had to be taken to the Hospital. I am pleased to say, however, that this constable is now able to carry on his duties as usual. Other members of the Force and special constables received minor injuries, but none were sufficiently serious to keep them away from duty for more than a few days. Stones, bricks, iron bolts, and other articles were freely used by the rioters; and in the riots which took place in Post Office Square, Taranaki Street, and opposite Messrs. Whitcombe and Tombs revolvers were brought into use by those engaging in riot. A horse ridden by one of the regular police was shot in the shoulder by a rioter in Post Office Square. The injured horse fell, bringing down his rider, who was attacked by the rioters while on the ground, but he was rescued and removed to a place of safety before he received any serious injury. The mounted and foot special constables who were called to the assistance of the police during the strike rendered very great assistance in maintaining order, and during the time they were in the cities performing their duties their conduct under all circumstances was most exemplary.

I would suggest that the Police Offences Act, 1908, be so amended as to compel the drivers of all vehicles to keep good lights burning on their vehicles whenever in use in any road, street, or other public place, between the hours of sunset and sunrise. Many serious accidents, some of which have proved fatal, have occurred of late. Probably these mishaps would not have taken place had the vehicles which caused the accidents been provided with sufficient lights.

Section 4 of the Licensing Act, 1908, defines a "public bar" in licensed premises, but it is very doubtful whether 20 per cent. of the present licensed premises have a public bar as defined by the Act. In most cases the doors which originally opened immediately from the bar to a street have been built up, with the result that nearly all bars now open into a passage in the hotel premises, and have no door opening immediately on to a street. The police do not object to the view of the bars being shut off from the street—indeed, it is better that this should be so—but as certain offences may be committed in a bar which cannot be punished so long as they are committed in one not opening on to a street, it may be well to amend the definition of public bar to mean "any place in any licensed premises in which liquor is sold or kept for sale." This would cover private as well as public bars.

In the Mangonui County, in the extreme north of the Dominion, a number of Austrians make and sell wine, and some of these wine-producers have established depots for the sale of the wine at all remote gum-digging camps throughout that district. The producer is allowed by law to sell his wine in quantities of not less than 2 gallons at any one time, but it appears that wine is sold from these depots by the bottle, and that it is purchased by both Maori and European