

the Police Force up to its normal strength during such a critical period. Recruiting for the Expeditionary Forces has had the effect of practically cutting off the supply of suitable candidates for the Police Force, which rendered it all the more necessary that the services of present members of the Force should be retained in the Dominion.

During the past year numerous applications have been received from various sources for the appointment of additional police, with the object of either establishing new stations or increasing the number of the police at existing stations. The Department recognizes that many of these requests are fully justified, and should be complied with as far as circumstances permit, but in other cases representations have been made to have constables stationed in localities where they would have little in the nature of police duty to do. The more urgent requirements are referred to by the officers in charge of districts in their annual statements, which are printed with this report. Under normal conditions I would have asked that provision be made for an increase of fifty constables to the strength of the Force, so that all reasonable demands for extra police could be satisfied, but in view of existing circumstances I regret that I can see my way to recommend the appointment of only twenty additional constables for this year.

Another matter which has a certain bearing on the foregoing subject is the volume of work which the police are performing on behalf of other Government Departments, and which does not in any way come within the scope of ordinary police duties. In many cases requests for additional police are due to the fact that the local member of the Force is so much occupied with these extraneous duties that he is unable to attend properly to police matters. I am of opinion that the police should be relieved of these duties as much as possible, or that the various Departments concerned should contribute to the Police vote an annual sum in proportion to the time devoted by the police to the work of such Departments.

During the year the number of police-stations connected with various telephone bureaux throughout the country has been increased, with great advantage to both the Department and the general public.

The use of bicycles by members of the Force in the discharge of their various duties has been greatly extended, thus enabling the police to deal more expeditiously with urgent matters, particularly in suburban areas. I would, however, recommend that a motor-car be provided for each principal police centre, to enable the officer in charge to visit the various stations under his control more frequently than he can do under existing conditions. The car would also be available for the use of the police in urgent cases in the country.

A motor-van for the conveyance of prisoners is badly needed at both Auckland and Christchurch, where the horse vehicles now in use are practically worn out and will soon have to be replaced.

A matter requiring serious consideration is the unsuitability of the present police training-depot. The present buildings provide accommodation for only about 22 men, and the drill-ground is quite insufficient for the drilling of a large squad of recruits. Consequently, the depot can no longer be looked upon as suitable for the accommodation and training of larger squads of recruits which it will be necessary to keep in training to fill vacancies and to provide for an increased strength of the Force in the future. The question of removing the depot from the city altogether and establishing it within easy distance of Wellington—at, for instance, Trentham, where a suitable area can no doubt be obtained upon which to erect the necessary buildings and provide a fairly large drill-ground—is one that will have to be considered in the immediate future.

If sufficient accommodation were available at the depot all members of the Force under a certain age could be called into the depot in small squads for an annual course of drill and instruction, extending over a period of ten days or a fortnight. Lectures on matters of law and instructions on police duties, discipline, and administration could also be given in the depot. There is no gainsaying the fact that in many instances men who do not receive a periodical drilling become ungainly in their movements, and the only way to remedy these conditions, so far as I can see, is to call the men into the depot periodically for a course of drill.

It would also be necessary to have stables and an exercising-ground for horses at the new depot, to allow of young horses for the mounted police being thoroughly trained, so as to render the animals safe for the riders as well as the general public on occasions when the mounted police are called out to regulate traffic or keep order in the streets.

As serious injuries have been inflicted upon persons in various parts of the Dominion during recent years, and in some cases death has resulted through the criminal or negligent use of revolvers and pistols by persons who should never be allowed to possess such weapons, I beg to suggest that the time has now arrived when stringent legislation should be passed regulating the sale and possession of all classes of firearms throughout the Dominion. As the law now stands there is nothing to prevent persons inclined to crime and homicide from possessing and carrying firearms. The law on this subject is quite different in Great Britain, where the Pistols Act, 1903, contains stringent provisions relating to the sale of and the licensing to carry pistols and revolvers.

I desire to draw attention to a matter to which Superintendent Ellison makes reference towards the end of his report. A slight amendment of section 204 of the Justices of the Peace Act, 1908, would bring the class of house referred to within the scope of the law and enable the police to mitigate the evil.

As regards the larger question touched upon by the Superintendent, relative to the spread of venereal disease, I can only say that I fully endorse his remarks and think it is a matter which should receive the attention of the Public Health authorities. While stringent regulations are in force dealing with the isolation and treatment of other infectious and contagious diseases, no