



No. 30.

GOVERNMENT NOTIFICATION.

The following Report from the Captain Superintendent of Police, for the year 1876, is published for general information.

By Command,

J. GARDINER AUSTIN,
Colonial Secretary.

Colonial Secretary's Office, Hongkong, 5th February, 1877.

[No. 16.]

VICTORIA, HONGKONG, 31st January, 1877.

SIR,—I have the honour to forward, for the information of His Excellency the Governor, the Annual Police Report, Statistics for the Blue Book, and Returns of Crime for the year 1876.

2. Compared with the returns for the year 1875, an increase of 19.43 per cent is shown on all cases reported; an increase exists of 6.45 on Serious Crime, and of 23.86 on Minor Offences.

3. The increase in Serious Crime is caused by 11 more cases of Highway Robbery, and by 121 more cases of Larceny occurring than in 1875. Of the reports of highway robbery, two were false, and in eight cases the property stolen was so small as to average under the value of \$4 in each case. On one occasion only was property worth more than \$25 stolen, and that case deserves particular comment. Four men conspired together to obtain money from a Chinese Bank. One of them induced the Manager to send a coolie with him with about \$500. He took the coolie to Zetland Street, where he was joined by his three confederates, and together they maltreated the coolie; and escaped for the time with \$266. The coolie subsequently died on the Mainland from the wounds inflicted. Within a week, full information was received as to the guilty parties, who had, in the meanwhile, escaped from the Colony, but owing, to the co-operation of H. B. M.'s Consul at Canton and of the Chinese Authorities, two of the men were shortly afterwards arrested and judged by the Chinese Tribunals.

4. The increase in Miscellaneous Offences is caused by the number of persons arrested as Mendicants and as unlicensed Hawkers.

5. With regard to the Mendicants, arrangements have been made for the reception by the Chinese Authorities of all Lepers sent to Canton. There has consequently been a marked decrease in the number of Mendicants of this class found within the last few months in the Colony. The Government have ordered the erection of some cells near the Police Stables at West Point for the temporary detention of Lepers, and an Ordinance awaits confirmation which authorises the Officer in command of the Police to deport such persons forthwith.

6. The number of unlicensed Hawkers is very large, and they cause a great deal of obstruction. It would be desirable if more Market accommodation could be afforded in the City. The out-villages have, as a rule, so increased in size, that it will be necessary to apply throughout the Colony the law as to the taking out of licences by Hawkers. At the same time, I think it would be more convenient if the licensing of Hawkers (and of Chair Coolies) should be transferred from the Registrar General's to the Police Department. The law, moreover, should be enlarged so as to deal with Marine Hawkers, Hawkers of goods on board ships, and with Barbers and other persons carrying on business in the Streets.

7. The consolidation of the Deportation Ordinances was a work that was much needed; for the punishment for Breach of Conditional Pardon was simply the completion of the original sentence, and when this was done, branded men might live without molestation in the Colony; but now they can be re-deported. During 1876, 49 Chinese prisoners were deported and 28 released from Gaol on Conditional Pardons granted, as a rule, on the completion of half the term of sentence. As shown in Table D., 27 men were arrested for being found in the Colony after having been deported or pardoned conditionally.

8. In certain cases of Larceny and Highway Robbery it was observed that the crimes had been committed by Chin-Chiu men, who had previously, as a class, enjoyed a reputation for honesty in this Colony. The detection of the offenders was the more difficult, as I was unable to find men who could speak that dialect, who were suitable for Police duties and could procure the necessary security.

9. Considering the returns for the year as a whole, they may fairly be deemed satisfactory, especially when the development of the City, and of certain Villages, is considered, as well as the increased facilities that have been afforded for the influx of strangers into the Colony.

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10. The general health of the force has been better than in 1875; this is doubtless owing to the unusual comparative coolness of the summer. Seven deaths occurred, and among these two were especially to be regretted. I allude to those of Inspectors DODDS and YOUNGSON; these two Officers joined from the Scottish Police, and throughout their services in the Colony, displayed great trustworthiness and ability.

11. The European Force has been brought into a state of efficiency by the expenditure of a great deal of money and trouble. But this is likely to be seriously affected by the conclusion, at the present season, of the term of service of several of the men. In 1872, forty-five men joined from Scotland, and in 1873, 20 joined from London. These latter were unfortunately drafted immediately after a disturbance of some importance had taken place in the Metropolitan Police; consequently, some of the men who joined here were not of so high a standard of character as could have been wished. I enclose a return of the 65 men above alluded to, with remarks as to the cause of certain of them leaving. With reference to those that will remain in the Force after next month, I must state, that their conduct is, as a whole, very satisfactory, and that, if some of them left, it would cause a serious loss to the Colony. In February, 1877, the European Force, which is not large for the requirements of the service, will be eighteen below its proper strength, and it is with grave doubts, that I view the prospect of supplying these vacancies from the resources of the Colony.

12. I enclose a return of the changes and casualties that took place in the Police Force during 1876; they are within three of the number that occurred in 1875.

13. The Stations are, as a rule, in good order; but I have to repeat certain previous reports, viz., that No. 7 Station, West Point, is far too small for the number of men stationed there. No. 8 Station, Tai-ping-shan, is old and badly ventilated, and should be rebuilt when possible. At the Central Station, more accommodation is urgently wanted, especially as the adjoining bungalows originally purchased for demolition, and for providing this required accommodation, have been condemned as no longer habitable. When funds admit, it would be a great boon to obtain additional rooms for married Europeans by the addition of another story to No. 9 Station, Caine Road.

14. New Streets are springing up at Yau-ma-Ti, British Kowloon; but the road drainage is very defective, as the drains are on the surface, and give the Village a very dirty appearance, but, I believe, this will soon be remedied. I notice also, that between two streets, one facing the sea, and one parallel to that, there is an alley formed by the backs of the houses; this, I hear, is on private ground, unless therefore the matter is dealt with at once, the difficulty may there, as in Victoria, arise as to whether it is a private road and inaccessible to the Police for general purposes.

15. The sale of so much land at British Kowloon renders it expedient that a Guard-house should be erected at the North-east corner of the Peninsula, near Ma-Tau-Wai. This matter has been before considered.

16. The Blue Book Reports are attached, and also:—

A., Table of Crimes and Offences reported.

B., Table of Miscellaneous Offences.

C., Comparative Returns with years 1874, 1875.

D., Table of Criminals arrested in 1876 for returning from Deportation, or for Breach of Conditional Pardon.

E., Table of Casualties in the Force.

F., Table of Men who joined from Scotland and England.

G., Report on the Police School, by Mr. FALCONER.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient Servant,

W. M. DEANE,
Captain Superintendent of Police.

The Honourable J. GARDINER AUSTIN, C.M.G.,
Colonial Secretary,
HONOKONG.