

### VIII.—CRIMINAL AND POLICE.

The total of all cases reported to the Police was 20,048 being an increase of 3,265 or 83 per cent as compared with 1925. There was in 1926 an increase in serious offences of 599 or 15·8 per cent as compared with the previous year. The number of serious offences reported was 185 above the average of the quinquennial period commencing with the year 1922. The number of minor offences reported shows an increase of 2,666 as compared with 1925 and was 3,355 over the average of the quinquennial period.

The total strength of the Police Force in 1926 was Europeans 246, Indians 572, Chinese 946 making a total of 1,764 exclusive of the eight superior officers and staff of clerks and coolies. These figures include police paid for by the Railway and other Government departments. Of this force 16 Europeans, 79 Indians, and 98 Chinese were stationed in the New Territories during the year.

The District Watchmen Force, numbering 122, to which the Government contributes \$2,000 per annum, was well supported by the Chinese during the year. These watchmen patrol the streets in the Chinese quarter of the City. They are placed on police beats and are supervised by the European police on section patrol. A detective branch of the force has done useful work under the supervision of a European Inspector.

The total number of persons committed to Victoria Gaol was 6,511 as compared with 6,339 in 1925. Of these 1,154 were committed for criminal offences against 613 in 1925. Of committals for non-criminal offences there were 106 less for hawking without a licence, and 2 more for unlawfully cutting trees, than in 1925.

The daily average of prisoners confined in the Gaol was 1,054 the average for 1925 being 1,116, and the highest previous average being 1,066 in 1924. The percentage of prisoners to population, according to the daily average of the former and the estimated number of the latter, was 0·13. The average percentage for the last ten years was 0·13. Owing, however, to the large floating population, which is constantly moving between the Colony and Chinese Territory, the percentage of crime to population does not convey an accurate idea of the comparative criminality of the residents of the Colony. The Victoria Gaol has accommodation for 700 prisoners including patients in Hospital. The Branch Prison at Laichikok has accommodation for 450 prisoners in association.

The prison discipline was satisfactory, the average of punishments per prisoner being 0·49 as compared with 0·71 in 1925 and 0·43 in 1924.

Long sentence prisoners serving two years and upwards are taught useful trades, including printing, book-binding, tin-smithing, mat-making, tailoring, carpentering, etc. The profit on the work done was \$148,667·80 as against \$122,221·20 in 1925. A sum of \$4,029 was received and credited to Government for non-Government work as against \$3,758 in 1925.

---