

1909.

TURKEY

24 Jan.



59

Jerusalem,
March 4. 1909.

No.

Received by *post.*

(Subject.)

Consul Blech
No. 15.

*Deficiency of the police force in Jerusalem.
Reporting on - and lawlessness existing.*

Last Paper.

Ann

(Print.)

L. Zigmund (Minutes.)
PK

(How disposed of.)

(Action completed.)

(Index.)

Next Paper.

23 Jan.

No. 15

Jerusalem,
March 4. 1909.

Sir,

With reference to my immediately preceding despatch, I would beg leave to draw attention to the serious inadequacy of the police force in Jerusalem. I believe that there are not more than fifteen policemen in this city, the population of which now exceeds 80,000. In ordinary times security is as complete as in any portion of the Ottoman dominions, and though petty thefts, especially of poultry and occasionally horses, are not infrequent, it has been rare hitherto for serious crime to be committed.

His Excellency
The Right Honourable,
Sir Gerard Lowther, K.C.M.G., C.B.,
re. re. re.
Constantinople.

committed. But since the proclamation of the Constitution there is a marked tendency on the part of the people to refuse to obey the authorities, who are no longer able to employ the arbitrary and oppressive methods pursued until then, and who on the other hand have not at their disposal adequate legal means for enforcing compliance with the law. Without in any way attributing to the promulgation of the Constitution the lawlessness which has been noticeable during the past few months, it is a fact that several murders - a crime hitherto almost unknown - have been committed, while cases of house breaking have been of common occurrence. Amongst the victims of assassination was the aged Superior of the Russian Monastery on the Mount of Olives, and though in his case some fellahin have been arrested on suspicion I am not aware that any arrests have been made in connection with

with two other murders or with the numerous cases of burglary of which I have heard.

The Mutesarif professes his readiness to do everything he can, but complains that - although he has frequently represented to Constantinople the deficiencies of the judiciary and police no notice is taken of his requests for improvement. The one Mustantik (examining Magistrate) is venal and incompetent.

A paragraph recently appeared in the local official journal to the effect that the Ministry of the Interior had ordered ten policemen to be sent here from Beirut and Damascus; but on my congratulating Subhi Bey on this news he explained that there was no prospect of the order being carried out, as the men could not be spared.

In view of the fact that the period from February to Easter is the height of the tourist and pilgrim season, it is essential that

that every precaution should be taken for the maintenance of order; exaggerated rumours of insecurity are likely to prevent visitors from coming, and any diminution in their number - would cause serious loss to Jerusalem. For these reasons I think it my duty to dwell on the importance of remedying a state of things which may become dangerous.

I would add that while during the late discussions some alarm existed, I cannot think that the persons or property of foreigners were at any time in danger, and this view is shared by those of my colleagues to whom I have spoken on the subject. But with a recrudescence of disturbance, - matters might become serious, and there is always the risk of accident.

I have the honour to be,

with the greatest respect,

Sir,

Your Excellency's most obedient,

humble servant,

E. Bleek.