

during 1895. The increase was occasioned principally in the number of arrests for wife-desertion, failing to support parents, breaking and entering houses, and drunkenness. During 1894 41 cases of wife-desertion were reported, against 93 for last year; for failing to support parents, 16 cases were reported, against 38 for last year; for breaking and entering houses, 55 cases were reported, against 112 for last year; and for drunkenness, 937 arrests were made, against 970 for last year, being a total increase of 33.

I am glad to be able to report the satisfactory operation of the Infant Life Protection Act. During the year 120 certificates were issued, after inquiry, to different females to allow them to receive infants, and, so far, they seem to have complied with the provisions of the statute in every respect.

Complaints are still made of the growth of larrikinism, and of the existence of "pushes," as they are now called. Large numbers of this class are constantly summoned before the Courts here, at the instance of the Police, for various breaches of the Police Offences Act—such as throwing stones, using insulting language, committing assaults on unoffending citizens, and such like—but owing to the difficulty of identification and the unity of statement of the accused, they too frequently outswear the witnesses for the prosecution and escape punishment. I have frequently urged that an amendment be made in the law so as to allow constables to arrest in all such cases without having to go through the slow and cumbrous process of laying information and obtaining summonses.

In my last annual report I suggested the desirableness of having second-hand dealers in goods brought under the law, as is the case with pawnbrokers. Pawnbrokers are obliged to keep books and enter up all their dealings, and their books are open to inspection by the Police. There is no such restriction placed upon the second-hand dealer, who can do as he pleases, and numbers of them are well-known receivers of stolen property.

During the year the station at Southbridge has been closed, and a new station has been opened at Cheviot.

The police-buildings throughout the district are in a more satisfactory state than they have been for many years past.

---

#### INSPECTOR W. S. PARDY, OTAGO, SOUTHLAND, AND LAKES.

The strength of this district is 109, made up as follows, and distributed among fifty police stations: one Inspector, fourteen sergeants, ninety constables, one district constable (at Stewart Island), and three detectives.

By the Offences Return forwarded to your office for the year ending the 31st December, 1895, it will be seen that there has been a small increase of 27 in the number of offences reported, but this increase is almost entirely confined to the lighter offences. In the serious crime of murder, there has been an increase of one over the former year of 1894—the murder of the bailiff, Stewart, at Balfour, by John McKewan. In the minor kind of thefts, there has been a large decrease; but in those of a more serious nature, such as theft of horses, theft from dwellings, and from the person, there has been a considerable increase, but a decrease, taking the whole of the offences coming under the heading of theft. In regard to sly grog-selling, the Police in this district have been very successful in securing convictions, and although they have not entirely stamped out the evil, they have succeeded in greatly minimising it.

The Infant Life Protection Act, has been enforced so far as possible, but until it has been amended, it will be of little use in securing the object for which the Act was passed—viz., the protection of infants against the avarice of baby-farmers.

With regard to the discipline of the Force in this district, I may say that, with a few exceptions, the sergeants, constables and detectives, have performed their duties with zeal and discretion, with the result that crime of every description has been successfully kept in check, and the many outside duties the Police are called on to perform faithfully carried out. As regards the exceptions, it was found necessary to dispense with the services of four constables during the year.

The police-buildings throughout the district are all in fair condition, repairs having been carried out where necessary.

---