

A new station was established at Tuai. A modern police residence and office was built at Clive, replacing the building which was in use for the past sixty years.

For the year ended 31st December, 1939, the total number of offences reported was 1,976, an increase on the previous year of 83. Of the offences reported, 1,833 were accounted for by arrests or summonses, leaving 143 undetected.

The principal increases were theft, house or shop breaking, receiving stolen property, and drunkenness.

The principal decreases were—found on licensed premises and intoxicated in charge of a motor-vehicle.

No serious crimes were committed during the year.

The conduct of the members of the Force on the whole has been good. Six constables were dealt with for breaches of Police Regulations, three of them being dismissed from the Force.

INSPECTOR SHANAHAN, NEW PLYMOUTH DISTRICT.

The strength of the police in this district on 31st March, 1940, was fifty, being authorized strength.

An increase of two constables is required at New Plymouth in order to efficiently carry out beat duty, relieving duty, and meet the requirements of forty-eight-hour week and sickness.

The total number of offences reported during the year ended 31st December, 1939, was 1,116, as compared with 1,402 for 1938, a decrease of 286. Of offences reported, 1,062 were accounted for by arrest or summons.

The principal increases were indecent assault, common assault, exposure and grossly indecent acts, gaming offences, selling liquor to youths, and illegally supplying liquor to Natives.

Decreases: Breaches of Motor-vehicles Act, house and shop breaking, drunkenness, converting cars, Sunday trading, failing to maintain, and illegally on licensed premises.

The conduct of the police has been very good during the year and duties have been carried out in a very satisfactory manner, only one member having been dealt with for a minor breach of regulations.

There has been no serious crime in the district during the past year.

INSPECTOR DEMPSEY, WANGANUI DISTRICT.

The authorized strength was increased by one constable, due to the appointment of a second constable at Ohakune.

I recommend that an additional detective be appointed to Wanganui. Frequently one or more of the detective staff is away in the King-country for a week at a time, creating a shortage of staff for emergencies.

The annual offences return for the year ended 31st December, 1939, shows a total of 1,567 offences reported, an increase of 144 over 1938, and of the total, 1,464 offences were dealt with by arrest or by summons.

The increases include theft, unlawful use of motor-vehicles, intoxication while in charge of motor-vehicles, mischief, assault offences against women generally, selling or exposing liquor for sale, and illegal supply of liquor to Natives.

The decreases include drunkenness, bookmakers' convictions, disobedience of maintenance orders, forgery, house-breaking, breaches of the peace, and offences against the Motor-vehicles Act.

There has been an annual increase in the number of persons charged with being intoxicated while in charge of motor-vehicles, the annual figures being 1937, 21; 1938, 34; and 1939, 43.

On Xmas Eve a Chinese market-gardener, whose garden had been robbed on occasion, heard a noise amongst his vegetables and fired two shots from a .410 calibre shot-gun in the direction of the sound, thereby inflicting light pellet wounds on a deaf Maori woman. "No bill" was returned by the grand jury.

On 31st December a Maori who had been dumb from birth, while in a jealous rage, attacked a Maori girl with a knife, inflicting one wound. On a plea of "Guilty" entered at the Supreme Court to a count of doing grievous bodily harm, the offender was ordered to be detained for reformatory purposes for a period not exceeding two years.

On the night of 27th December, 1939, at Taihape, a man who was obsessed by a fancied or real wrong fired a .303 calibre rifle at the house of his father-in-law. Earlier still he had written a letter demanding money, and after the shot had been fired he wrote another letter to a relative at Wellington. At the February sittings of the Supreme Court at Wanganui the offender, upon conviction for intimidation and for two offences of demanding money by menaces, was placed on probation for two years, with special conditions which, if complied with, will prevent a repetition of the offences.

The conduct of the police throughout the district has been very good and frequently a high state of efficiency had been shown in the work performed. No member of the Force was dealt with as a defaulter.

During the year motor traffic on the roads was very heavy and accidents were fairly numerous, due frequently to want of thought or want of care.

By using cars for which the Department pays an allowance, police in the country districts were able, very often, to arrive at the scene of collision while the parties were still there, and with assistance from the drivers were able to fix an approximate point of impact and trace tire tracks.