

Splendid co-operation throughout the district enabled us to cope with many additional and arduous tasks that fell to our lot as a result of the war.

The patience and tact exercised by members of all ranks in the performance of duty merit the highest commendation.

Complaints have been received from members of the public and the military authorities of excessive drinking among members of the Military Forces when off duty and while travelling on troop trains. In my opinion some of these complaints are justified, and the only effective means of checking such conduct is an absolute prohibition by law of the sale of liquor on licensed premises after hours.

INSPECTOR CARROLL, NELSON DISTRICT.

The strength of the Force in this district on the 31st March was thirty-eight, which is the authorized strength. Owing to extra duties arising out of the war and control of aliens, every man is kept fully employed.

There has not been any alteration in the number or location of the stations during the year, but this report would not be complete if I did not again recommend that a new station be opened at Renwicktown, about eight miles on the Nelson side of Blenheim on the main Blenheim-Nelson highway. Apart altogether from the civilian population in the locality, there are now in the vicinity of one thousand men at the nearby Woodbourne Aerodrome. Renwicktown is at present worked from Blenheim, the nearest station in the opposite direction being Havelock, which is twenty miles farther on.

For the year ended 31st December, 1940, the total number of offences reported was 841, which is 124 fewer than the number reported in 1939. There were arrests or summonses in 822 cases, leaving 19 offences undetected. The principal decreases were in respect of assaults, carnally knowing girls, selling or exposing liquor after hours, and being found on licensed premises after hours. There were increases in the number of thefts from dwellings, housebreaking, burglary, and unlawfully using motor-cars and bicycles. In connection with offences under these headings a very large proportion were committed by juvenile offenders, and it is perhaps worthy of note that no fewer than 54 out of a total of 229 were committed by young persons who either were or had been under the care or supervision of the Child Welfare Department owing to offences previously committed by them. Of the 68 unlawful conversions of motor-vehicles, &c., 44 were traced to these boys, as were also 24 out of the total of 113 thefts committed in the district during the year.

The annual offences return also shows a substantial increase in the number of prosecutions for drinking or being in possession of liquor in or in the vicinity of dance-halls, but this increase can be accounted for by the fact that the law prohibiting liquor from dance-halls operated only during the last three months of the year 1939.

The conduct of members of the Force in the district has on the whole been good, but two constables were dealt with for breaches of the regulations.

INSPECTOR PACKER, GREYMOUTH DISTRICT.

On the 31st March, 1941, the strength of the Force in this district was forty-eight, being the authorized strength.

In June, 1940, due to the entry of Italy into the war, eight constables were temporarily transferred to this district, and were engaged guarding the coalfields and Dobson Electric-power Station for three months as a precautionary measure. Six have since been returned to their station, and two have been absorbed in replacing constables transferred.

A new police-station was completed at Runanga during the early part of March.

The offences return for the year ended 31st December, 1940, shows a total of 1,136, as against 1,067 for the previous year, an increase of 69 offences. Of all the offences reported 1,082 were dealt with by arrest or summons, leaving 54 undetected.

The principal increases were thefts, attempted house or shop breaking, failing to maintain wife and children, selling or supplying liquor after hours, intoxicated while in charge of motor-vehicles, keeping or managing a common gaming-house. The most noticeable increase is that of 68 per cent. for thefts by young persons, and I attribute this to a lack of parental control.

The principal decreases were Arms Act breaches, found unlawfully on licensed premises, drunkenness, and drunk and disorderly, unlawfully using motor-cars, &c., common assaults.

There were two crimes worthy of note during the year. The decomposed dead body of a child was found in the Buller River in April, 1940, and although every inquiry was made the identity of the child could not be established; no trace has been found of the offender, and no child has been reported missing. The other crime was the theft of a mail-bag from the Midland Railway-train, and the co-operation of the Greymouth and Christchurch police was responsible for the speedy arrest of the offender.

During the year one constable was dealt with for a breach of Police Regulations, but with that exception the conduct of the police throughout the district has been excellent and their work and general efficiency up to the required standard.

SUPERINTENDENT RAWLE, CHRISTCHURCH DISTRICT.

On the 31st March, 1941, the authorized strength of the Force in this district was 180, an increase of 11 since the previous year, made up of one senior sergeant at Christchurch Station, and one sergeant and nine constables at Lyttelton Station.

The total number of offences reported during the year was 5,537, compared with 5,133 for the previous year, being an increase of 404. Of all offenders reported 4,722 were prosecuted.

The principal increases appear under the following headings: Indecent assault on male, indecent assault, assault, theft, house or shop breaking, arson, unlawfully using motor-cars, liquor in vicinity of dance-hall, illegally on licensed premises.

The principal decreases appear under the following headings: False pretences, breach of peace, &c., common gaming-house, default of maintenance, breaches of Motor-vehicles Act.

The conduct of the members of the Force on the whole has been very good. Three constables were dismissed for breaches of the Police Regulations, and two were dealt with for minor breaches.

The advent of the war has caused an appreciable increase in the work performed, so much so that a special staff of six were detailed under the Detective Sub-Inspector to carry out the work arising therefrom. Long hours have been worked by them cheerfully in order to cope with it.