

at Naseby. Motor-garages were provided at North-east Valley, Nelson, Lower Riccarton, Paeroa, Phillipstown, Hawera, and Northcote, and at Superintendent's and Inspector's residences at Wellington. Sites for police-stations were acquired at Karamea, Kerepehi, Ngongotaha, Petone, Riversdale, Millerton, and Dobson, and a Sub-Inspector's residence was purchased at Hataitai (Wellington).

Repairs, renovations, and improvements were also effected at many stations throughout the Dominion.

GENERAL.

Recruiting.—Owing to war conditions it became necessary to strengthen the Force in order to cope with the increased demand on the services of the police. As time goes on it becomes increasingly difficult to secure the right type of recruit, as every endeavour is made to avoid interference with recruiting for the armed services. I have found it necessary to modify considerably the requirements relating to the qualifications of candidates. Nevertheless, men of a fairly good type have been obtained, but not in the number required. The Force is at present about 25 men below strength, and at least a further 47 are required for duties in connection with shipping. Those taken on during the past year have had no special course of training. They are, however, given lectures regularly and are coached by a sergeant who is constantly in touch with them.

Many of the permanent members of the Force applied for permission to join the armed forces, but the applications had to be refused on account of the necessity of retaining all trained personnel.

Efficiency. Notwithstanding the fact that there are a large number of men in the Force with short service the standard of efficiency has been well maintained. Although there has been a decrease compared with the previous year, there has still been a good deal of serious crime, including 12 murders—6 of which occurred at Kōiterangi, West Coast, 4 of the victims being members of the Force and 2 being members of the Home Guard. In all the murder cases the offenders were arrested.

Conduct of Police. The general conduct of the police has been very satisfactory. All branches of the Service have worked harmoniously, with the result that excellent work has been accomplished. All have had extra work to perform, which has been undertaken cheerfully. The hours worked far exceed the average day of eight hours.

Transport.—The efficiency in this Department has been well maintained during the year. A great deal of extra travelling has had to be undertaken to see that vital points are being given the supervision their importance demands. Great difficulty is being experienced in getting tires to keep the cars of our country constables in efficient order. Tires capable of being retreaded are being so treated, the Department meeting portion of the cost in all cases where an annual motor-car allowance is granted. At present the tire position is acute.

Buildings.—So far as was practicable with the skilled tradesmen available further progress was made in improving and modernizing old buildings that were of sound structure. The erection of new buildings already authorized has to stand over in the meantime.

Liquor at Dances.—The legislation in respect of this class of offence is working very well. I cannot say that the practice is on the wane. In some districts it certainly is, as the Magistrates in those districts have made it too expensive for the offenders by imposing salutary fines, while in a few other districts where only nominal fines have been inflicted there is no reduction in the number of the offences reported. It is a good piece of legislation, and while the police are particularly vigilant in respect of the enforcement of it it is very regrettable that there is not any noticeable decline in the number of prosecutions.

Aliens.—Much time is taken up in connection with aliens, but it is time well spent. A lot of wild rumours and stupid reports are circulated about aliens from time to time. All these have to be investigated and probed. Nothing is left to chance.

War Activities.—In addition to the supervision of wharves, shipping, and the many vital points such as cables, oil installations, freezing-works, fertilizer-works, power-stations, and numerous other places, considerable time is given to the three Services and the National Service Department in assisting them wherever and whenever required. This work is growing rapidly. Military defaulters and national service defaulters take up a great deal of our time in inquiries. The relationship with all these Departments is most harmonious.

Inquiries into breaches of the Censorship Regulations, Lighting Restrictions Regulations, and Oil Fuel Regulations also take up much of our time. Many prosecutions have been taken on behalf of other Departments for breaches of these and other war regulations.

Water Patrol Police.—During the year a Police Water Patrol was instituted at Auckland, Wellington, and Lyttelton, and suitable launches were obtained and manned by constables. Excellent work is being done in each place. A number of persons have been saved from drowning by our launch in Wellington. Were it not for the presence of the launch certainly some lives would have been lost through the capsizing of dinghys, yachts, and rowing-boats.

Women Police.—Since my last report the trainees have completed their training and have been posted to the four centres. They are attached to the Detective Branch of the Service, where they are doing excellent work. They investigate offences where women and children are concerned, and give special attention to young girls out late at night and apparently not under parental control.

Additional Staff required.—In order to cope with the additional work, due to war activities principally, I beg to ask for authority for three additional sergeants and eighteen constables at an annual cost of £7,840, the amount required for this financial year being £5,880.

D. J. CUMMINGS, Commissioner of Police.