

Criminal Registration Branch.—At Headquarters on the 31st March, 1944, the finger impressions of 65,275 persons were on record; 3,482 were received, classified, indexed, and filed; 201 persons were identified as previous offenders; 2,219 photographs were taken by photographers attached to the Branch; the photographs of 3,725 prisoners (5,429 photographs) were received and dealt with; 656 photographs were reproduced in the *Police Gazette*; 15 wanted persons located; and 1 unknown deceased person identified by finger-prints.

Finger-prints left by offenders committing 74 crimes were identified as belonging to 35 persons, all of whom were convicted.

Finger-prints of 94 persons were received for inquiry from other countries, of which 13 were identified as those of persons previously convicted in New Zealand; the finger-prints of 16 New Zealand offenders were sent overseas for inquiry, 6 being identified as having been previously convicted outside this Dominion.

The finger-print system has, since its establishment in New Zealand, been responsible for the identification of 8,066 persons.

In conjunction with the Arms Bureau, various photographs and lecture slides were prepared.

Auckland Criminal Registration Branch.—On the 31st March, 1944, the finger-print collection in Auckland totalled 10,016 sets.

During the year 1,289 prisoners' finger-prints were received and were duly classified, searched, and filed.

The photographs of 248 prisoners were taken, and 1,240 prints were taken from the negatives; also numerous photographs of scenes of crimes and motor accidents were taken, the total number of photographs produced by the Branch during the year being 2,036.

Three volumes—i.e., 900 photographs—of New South Wales prisoners' photographs were received, card indexed, and filed in order of finger-print classification.

The remanded prisoners' forms, together with the results of the cases inserted for 493 prisoners, were dealt with.

In 25 cases offenders who would not otherwise have been known as having been previously convicted were traced by their finger-prints, and in 30 other cases prints left by offenders when committing crimes were identified and the offenders duly arrested and dealt with by the Courts. Most of these latter were serious offences, including breaking and entering, unlawful conversion of cars, false pretences, mischief, and theft. In some cases the offenders also admitted numerous other offences.

The *Modus Operandi* or Classification of Crime Section has again proved its usefulness during the year and makes an important link in crime detection.

Arms Bureau.—Although the firearms accident rate has fallen from 52 last year to 32 this year, there have been many other incidents calling for identification of weapons and missiles.

The identification of metal objects from which numbers or trade-marks had been abraded has also been carried out.

The Bureau has assisted the Army Department in connection with the assessing of compensation to be paid to owners of impressed service rifles whose rifles have been completely used up or have deteriorated through wear and other causes.

There were 32 accidents that came under police notice; of these, 15 were fatal. Shotguns played an unusually small part this year, there being only 4 accidents reported. The .22 rifle was responsible for 15 cases, of which 5 were fatal. Pistols and revolvers were more in evidence than usual, there being 5 cases, of which 1 was fatal. The average age of persons injured was 22 years 4 months; the oldest 74 and the youngest 8. Seven children under 16 were shot as a result of playing with firearms that had not been carefully kept out of their reach.

There were 2 shooting fatalities in which the Coroner could not decide whether accident or suicide.

Police Buildings, &c.—The following works in connection with police-stations were carried out during the year by the Public Works Department:—

New police-stations were erected at Oxford, Port Ahuriri, Cambridge, and Te Aroha, and extensive alterations and additions were effected at Whangarei and Taihape. The sergeant's residence at Feilding was completed, and residences purchased for an Inspector of Police at Wellington and for a senior sergeant at Greymouth. Additional land was acquired at Petone and Hunterville, and also a site for a police-station at Omakau.

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

GENERAL

Recruiting.—Very few recruits are now offering, and at the moment only an odd application is received. We are below the authorized strength to the extent of approximately 100 men. A number of the temporary men taken on for the duration of the war could not stand up to the work, some through age, others for various reasons. None of them was a first-grade man, all being grade II or III. Some, of course, were found unsuitable after being tried out, and were released. Considering the fact that a special course of training could not be given the temporary men, they have done very well, and some of them have been outstanding in their work.

Efficiency.—Despite the fact that we have a large percentage of untrained men, the efficiency of the service remains at a high standard.

Crime. There has been a substantial increase in major crime, particularly in house and shop breaking, receiving stolen property, forgery, and theft. There were 10 cases of murder and 9 of attempted murder. All these entailed a great deal of hard work. There was a decided decrease in cases of drunkenness and in the number of persons found on licensed premises and other minor offences. I am pleased to say the detection of the cases reported has been very creditable indeed.

Conduct of Police.—The general conduct of the police has been, on the whole, satisfactory. All branches of the service have worked hard in order to cope with the extra work thrown on the Department. The war, of course, has been responsible for a great deal of the extra work, but this has been undertaken cheerfully.