

Finger-prints of 213 persons were received from other countries for inquiry, of which 30 were identified as those of persons previously convicted in New Zealand. The finger-prints of 631 New Zealand offenders were sent overseas for inquiry, and of these, 127 were identified as having been previously convicted outside this Dominion.

To date, the finger-print system in Wellington has been responsible for the identification of 8,774 persons.

It has been very helpful in the identification of ship-deserters, some of whom have been responsible for a fair amount of shop-breaking and who have been found to have had convictions overseas.

In addition to this work, a large number of photographs of scenes of crimes or motor accidents were prepared.

The technical equipment at headquarters has been increased by provision of modern photographic and other appliances.

On the 31st March, 1948, the finger-print collection in the Auckland Criminal Registration Branch totalled 12,803 sets.

During the year 1,269 prisoners' finger-prints were received, duly classified, searched, and filed.

The photographs of 325 prisoners were taken and 1,625 prints were taken from negatives, as well as numerous photographs of scenes of crimes and of motor accidents. The total number of photographs produced by the Branch during the year was 2,704.

In 31 cases offenders were traced by their finger-prints, and in 14 other cases prints left by offenders when committing crimes were identified and the offenders were duly arrested and dealt with by the Courts.

*Arms Bureau.*—This Branch has carried out its usual functions in examining firearms which have come under the notice of the police. All firearms causing accidental death were examined and reports made available for the Coroners' Court. In many non-fatal cases also the weapons were examined. Where firearms were found to be in a worn-out state or had dangerous features it was possible to have them either properly repaired or destroyed.

Where crimes were committed with firearms the Arms Bureau was called upon for expert opinion relating to the weapon and the ammunition.

The identification of metal articles from which serial numbers, names, or trade-marks have been filed or otherwise obliterated is now routine work. During the year a number of these investigations was carried out successfully, including the restoration of a legend on a wooden gun-stock.

In order to maintain efficiency and safety, lectures and general instruction in the use and care of firearms were given to police in various centres, and practical target practice was also supervised.

Lectures and demonstrations were given to civilian sporting bodies, including mountaineering clubs and riflemen, with a view to reducing the accident rate with firearms.

The firearms-accident rate is much improved over last year's figures, there being 48 accidents this year, as against 57 for 1946-47, but the 14 fatalities show an increase of 1 on last year's figures.

Of the non-fatal accidents some were of a very serious nature involving loss of limbs and permanent disabilities.

The hammer shot-gun and the .22 rifle continue to be responsible for the large majority of reported accidents.

Nearly every accident was due to lack of proper care in the use of firearms on the part of those involved or to a sense of false security in relation to unsafe mechanisms.

*Work for other Departments.*—A very heavy volume of work of a most varied nature continues to be dealt with by the police for other Departments, and this occupies a good deal of the time of the police in conjunction with their other duties.