

The large number of escapees from various institutions has given the police considerable concern and has involved a heavy drain on the members of the Force and on transport, as well as considerable expense, in effecting recapture.

*Search Parties.*—A good deal of expense is incurred in the organization of search and rescue parties in rough and mountainous country. Apart from this, a heavy burden falls on the members of the Force in carrying out the rescue work, which becomes necessary in many cases through some inexperienced member of a party—obviously with little knowledge of the danger—drifting away from the more experienced members.

*Criminal Statistics.*—The criminal statistics (Appendix A) deal with offences reported to the police during the year ended 31st December last and show an aggregate net increase of 612 on the figures of 1946. The percentage of offences to the population was 1·91, as against 1·92 the previous year.

The number of offences reported during the year was 34,628, the number of cases in which arrests or summonses resulted was 29,238, leaving 5,390 cases in which no prosecution followed but which are still the subject of inquiries or have since been disposed of.

The percentage of arrests of summonses resulting from offences reported during the year 1947 was 84·43, the figures of the preceding year being 84·72.

There was an increase in the number of cases of burglary and breaking into shops and dwellings and in respect of forgery and receiving stolen property and false pretences and obtaining credit by fraud compared with the previous year, and in the number of cases of indecently assaulting a male and of indecent assault. There has again been a decrease in respect of the unlawful conversion of motor-vehicles.

There were 12 cases of murder, 3 of attempted murder, and 8 of manslaughter. In 1 case of murder the offender was acquitted; in 2 cases the offenders were found not guilty on grounds of insanity; in 1 case the offender was found not guilty of murder but guilty of manslaughter; in 4 cases a stay of proceedings was entered and the accused were ordered to be detained in mental hospitals; and in 3 cases convictions were recorded and four persons were sentenced to imprisonment for life.

In one case the offender has not been traced—that of a man found murdered at Wellington, but inquiries are still being continued.

I am pleased to say that prosecutions in connection with liquor at dances show a decrease of 124 cases. The police are making every effort to combat this class of offence.

*Drunkenness.*—There was an increase of 395 in the number of prosecutions for drunkenness during the year as compared with the previous year.

The number charged with drunkenness in 1947 was 2,464 (2,394 males and 70 females), whereas in 1946 the number was 2,069 (2,016 males and 51 females).

Four hundred and sixty-nine males (19·6 per cent.) and 25 females (35·7 per cent.) had previous convictions recorded against them, and 5·06 per cent. of the males were not permanent residents of the Dominion.

*Prosecutions against Hotelkeepers.*—Prosecutions against hotelkeepers during the year show a decrease of 63. There were 339 prosecutions resulting in 248 convictions during 1947, as against 402 prosecutions and 300 convictions in 1946.

*Sly-grog Selling.*—There were 84 prosecutions during the year for selling liquor without a licence, and also 5 prosecutions for other offences against the provisions of the Licensing Act in force in no-licence districts.

The fines imposed on the sly-grog sellers during the year 1947 amounted to £817 10s.

*Gaming Offences.*—There were 518 prosecutions under the Gaming Act, against 521 prosecutions in 1946. There were 266 prosecutions in connection with bookmaking during the year ended 31st March, 1948, resulting in 264 convictions, the amount of fines imposed being £15,108.