

The work of the Criminal Registration Branch is steadily increasing and the *modus operandi* or classification of Crime Index has been very useful during the year.

*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 2,418 on the figures of 1947. The percentage of offences to the population was 1·69, as against 1·91 the previous year.

The number of offences reported during the year was 37,046, the number of cases in which arrests or summonses resulted was 31,466, leaving 5,580 cases in which no prosecution followed but which are still the subject of inquiries or have since been disposed of.

The percentage of arrests or summonses resulting from offences reported during the year 1948 was 84·94, the figures of the preceding year being 84·43.

There was an increase in the number of cases of forgery, false pretences, uttering forged documents or certificates, obtaining credit by fraud, indecently assaulting a male, indecent assault, unnatural offence and exposure of person and grossly indecent acts, being intoxicated in charge of a motor-vehicle, theft, and drunkenness; but decreases were recorded in respect of burglary and breaking into shops and dwellings, receiving stolen property, unlawfully using motor-cars, &c., reckless or negligent driving, incest, rape, carnal knowledge, in possession of liquor in vicinity of dance halls.

In 1 case of murder the offender was acquitted; in 1 case a stay of proceedings was entered and the offender committed to a mental hospital; in 1 case the offender was found not guilty of murder but guilty of manslaughter and given two years' probation; in 1 case (that of a man found murdered at Wairoa) no arrest has yet been made, and in the remaining 9 cases convictions were recorded and the offenders (7) were sentenced to imprisonment for life.

I am pleased to say that prosecutions in connection with liquor at dances again show a decrease—there were 108 cases less than last year. The police are making every effort to combat this class of offence.

*Drunkenness.*—There was an increase of 631 in the number of prosecutions for drunkenness during the year as compared with the previous year.

The number charged with drunkenness in 1948 was 3,095 (2,982 males and 113 females), whereas in 1947 the number was 2,464 (2,394 males and 70 females).

Nine hundred and eighty-seven males (33·1 per cent.) and 39 females (34·51 per cent.) had previous convictions recorded against them, and 5·23 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 30. There were 369 prosecutions, resulting in 250 convictions during 1948, as against 339 prosecutions and 248 convictions in 1947.

*Sly-grog Selling.*—There were 202 prosecutions during the year for selling liquor without a licence, and also 18 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 1948 amounted to £2,547.

*Gaming Offences.*—There were 479 prosecutions under the Gaming Act, against 518 prosecutions in 1947. There were 219 prosecutions in connection with bookmaking during the year ended 31st March, 1949, resulting in 218 convictions, the amount of fines imposed being £12,020 10s.

*Prosecutions Under the Motor-vehicles Act.*—There was a decrease of one in the number of prosecutions for causing death or bodily injury through reckless driving of motor-vehicles, and of 135 for reckless or negligent driving, but an increase of 72 in the number of prosecutions for being intoxicated in charge of a motor-vehicle. In addition to warnings for minor breaches of the Act and regulations, there were 4,563 prosecutions for such breaches, being 111 more than in the previous year.