

The casualties during the year have been five resignations, one retirement under the provisions of the Police Provident Fund Act, and one death.

I am pleased to say that on the whole the conduct of sergeants, constables, and detectives has been good, and that they appear to perform their various duties very fairly.

I also note with pleasure that every effort has been made by the Department to make the sergeants' and constables' quarters as comfortable as possible throughout the district. Extensive improvements and repairs have been effected to stations during the year.

INSPECTOR N. KIELY, WANGANUI AND WEST COAST DISTRICT.

The licensing laws are well looked after, with the result that the publicans of this district observe the law fairly well. This is particularly noticeable in and about Wanganui.

The police throughout the district have in a great measure been successful in stopping the supply of liquor to native women at races, *tangis*, and other such meetings.

The conduct of the members of the Force in this district has been very good during the past twelve months, except in one or two cases, where punishment has been inflicted for breaches of the regulations. On the whole, the men are sober and attentive to their duties. The free issue of clothing is greatly appreciated by them.

INSPECTOR J. W. ELLISON, WELLINGTON AND MARLBOROUGH DISTRICT.

Undetected offences show a considerable decrease, the numbers being 204 for 1902, against 274 for 1901. Many of these were very trivial cases.

The increase in cases of drunkenness was confined to Wellington City. At the country stations there was a decrease of ten arrests in the aggregate; but in Wellington there was an increase of 541. Out of a total of 1,740 arrested for drunkenness in Wellington City, 554 were firemen and seamen belonging to vessels in port. Some of the causes for this increase are: Late decisions on the charge of "permitting drunkenness" (on licensed premises) have diminished the risk of conviction, and some Licensing Committees have not been disposed to listen to any complaints, thus a feeling of security was given to hotelkeepers who permitted excessive drinking on their premises. There was also general prosperity and plenty of work during the year, which made it easier for persons so inclined to obtain liquor.

The conduct of the members of the Force has been good. A few breaches of discipline were dealt with, and one constable had to be discharged by you for continued neglect of duty.

A word of praise is fairly due to the detective staff, all of whom have exerted themselves willingly and successfully; their work has been done smoothly and carefully. The sergeants and men in charge of stations have also been attentive and painstaking, and likewise the clerical staff.

At two or three of the stations in busy country towns (Carterton, Greytown, and Otaki), where constables act as Clerks of Court and Old-age Pensions officers, the clerical work of such duties, added to that of Factory Inspector, encroaches seriously on police duty, to the disadvantage of the latter; in fact, it will be necessary very soon to add another constable at one or two stations in this district, on account of the clerical work of other departments requiring the greater part of the constables' time.

I beg to recommend that at least two constables be added to Lambton Quay station, Wellington, one to Manners Street, and one to Lower Hutt, and that provision also be made for an extra man at Petone. It is impossible to work the city beats with the number of constables now available.

Provision should also be made for a station in the neighbourhood of Ohiro Road or Brooklyn, for a constable to work Brooklyn, Mitchelltown, and Aro Street.

An additional constable at Manners Street, and the removal of the Clyde Quay station to Oriental Bay, would be a great advantage. At present a house cannot be got at the latter place, but one may be secured later on.

The Second-hand Dealers Act of last year promises to be a most useful statute, and will, I believe, in a great measure answer the principal purposes intended—namely, check the manufacture of juvenile criminals, and aid in detecting old offenders who were in the past able to skilfully "fence" stolen property without difficulty.

The question of regulating public billiard-rooms and other similar places by statute deserves some attention. These places are frequented by mere boys, as well as persons of shady character. They are practically kept open all night, and often on Sundays crowds of young men assemble in them for questionable purposes. Section 16 of "The Police Offences Act, 1884," does not always apply, as many of the rooms are not kept open to public view on Sundays, and the persons admitted cannot be termed the public. Municipal authorities have powers for licensing billiard-rooms being places of public amusement, but in many places this is not done, whilst many public billiard-rooms are outside boroughs. These places might with advantage be brought under the Police Offences Act as to closing and opening hours. "The Gaming and Lotteries Act, 1881," gives the police the right of entry into them at any time.

INSPECTOR E. WILSON, NELSON AND WESTLAND DISTRICT.

Out of 692 offences reported, 662 offenders have been dealt with for 669 offences, leaving some 23 offences undetected. These figures, I submit, are satisfactory, and speak for the vigilance of the police in the district.

I would again bring under notice the great necessity for additional constables at Westport and Greymouth. The strength of the latter town is seven, and whenever any of the out-station men go on leave a man has to be sent from here: this leaves this town much undermanned; in fact,