

Good results have followed the passing of "The Gaming and Lotteries Act Amendment Act, 1907." Betting and gaming generally has been considerably reduced, and the inducements to bet minimised. The Act does not, however, provide against betting at coursing meetings, shooting competitions or matches, and pigeon-shooting, which provision seems necessary.

"THE INFANT LIFE PROTECTION ACT, 1896."

During the year there were 577 registered homes throughout the Dominion, representing 954 infants, against 570 homes and 794 infants in 1906.

Forty-two deaths occurred in the homes during the year, against 19 in the preceding year. Six licensees were prosecuted for breaches of the Act, and 6 were convicted, against 10 prosecutions and 6 convictions in 1906. Seven licenses were cancelled.

The administration of the Infant Life Protection Act was transferred from the Police Department to the Education Department on the 31st December last, as provided by the new Act of last year, and I trust the change will have beneficial results.

CONDUCT OF MEMBERS OF THE FORCE.

During the year under review the conduct of members of the service, taken generally, has been very good. Serious breaches of the regulations, especially in relation to drink, have been of very rare occurrence. Young constables have, as usual, had to be stringently dealt with in order to maintain discipline, several having been dismissed, but on the whole the efficiency of the Force has been well maintained.

Both the uniform and detective branches of the service have worked harmoniously together, and have performed their respective duties in a very creditable manner; good supervision has been maintained over the men; and, generally speaking, members of the service seem well satisfied with the present conditions of the Force.

FINGER-PRINT BRANCH.

The *personnel* of the branch is the same as last year—viz., two finger-print experts working under my direct supervision—and their duties during the year have been creditably performed.

The finger-print collection on the 31st March last consisted of the impressions of 7,622 offenders, showing an increase of 1,471 as compared with the previous year.

During the year 123 persons, claiming to be first offenders, were by means of their finger-prints identified as previously-convicted persons, an increase of 19 over last year.

Finger-prints of persons in custody here have, since my last report, been identified in England, Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne, Hobart, Adelaide, Perth, and Johannesburg as those of criminals previously convicted and finger-printed in those places.

During the year 49 finger-marked articles from housebreaking cases were submitted to the branch by the Police of the various districts for identification. Only 25 of these bore prints that were sufficiently clear to be of any value. Of these 25, 12 resulted in identifications; and the information that the branch were thus able to give to the police, in several cases, materially assisted in securing the conviction of the offenders. In 5 cases, however, the evidence of identification given by the finger-print experts was quite uncorroborated, but the system was so clearly demonstrated by the experts that the accused, recognising the futility of pleading not guilty, in each case admitted the offence.

Two cases occurred in the Napier District which demonstrated the importance of the finger-print system of identification, as follows:—Two men were arrested at different times and on different charges. Their finger-prints were taken and forwarded to the Finger-print Branch, where they were identified as those of persons previously convicted, and the police of the district were so informed; but on the accused being brought up on remand they both denied on oath having been previously convicted, and were discharged. A prosecution for perjury (denial of previous convictions) was instituted. Expert finger-print evidence was adduced which conclusively proved that both the accused had been previously convicted, and this resulted in their admittal of the previous convictions and conviction for perjury.

The photographic portion of the branch is still working well, photography being quite indispensable to the successful working of the finger-print system of identification. During the past year photographs to the number of 2,937 have been turned out at a cost of 1½d. each, whereas prior to the establishment of the branch this work was done by the local photographers at a cost of about 4d. each. A considerable saving in expenditure is thus effected, besides which the work is much more expeditiously done.

From the above it will therefore be seen that the branch is working most satisfactorily, and is proving very serviceable not only in the identification of offenders, but in the detection of crime.

TRAINING OF CANDIDATES, ETC.

The training of candidates is still proving highly satisfactory. The benefits derived from the instruction imparted to probationers in education, drill, ambulance-work, technical police duties, Police Acts, and the finger-print system of identification is having a marked effect on the men.

During the year there were 99 fresh candidates who, after inquiry, measurement, &c., were found to be eligible for the service. No dearth of eligible candidates at present exists.

Ninety-five men were taken on during the year; their nationalities, religions, and occupations are as follows:—Nationalities: New-Zealand-born, 46; Australians, 13; Irish, 10; English, 16; Scotch, 9; South African, 1. Religions: Church of England, 36; Roman Catholics, 27; Presbyterians, 24; Wesleyans, 4; Methodists, 3; Baptist, 1. Occupations: