

The casualties were—Retired on pension, 1; medically unfit, 1; resignations, 7; dismissals, nil; defaulters under the Police Regulations, 21.

The total number of offences reported during the year ending the 31st December, 1907, was 3,651, and the number of persons apprehended or summoned was 3,488.

An increase of 236 offences is shown in comparison with the return for the year 1906.

The principal increases in offences for the year are as follows: Assaults, common, 22; breaches of the peace, 14; disorderly and riotous conduct, 42; drunkenness, 73 (in Christchurch City, 225); indecent exposure and behaviour, 32; malicious injury to property, 44; keeping disorderly houses, 10; sly-grog selling, 20; thefts, 30; trespass, 68; vagrancy 18.

Decreases in the following offences are very satisfactory: Neglected and criminal children, 21; obscene and profane language, 45.

The number of bicycles reported as lost or stolen was 413: of those, 61 were not recovered, but there are 32 unclaimed bicycles in store, some of them, if not all, were probably stolen. There are upwards of 30,000 bicycles in use in the City of Christchurch; some are provided with a chain and lock, and are made secure by the owners while they are absent attending to business, but others are left in public streets and by-ways without locks or fastenings of any kind, although the owners may be absent for perhaps hours at a time.

The number of prosecutions by police for breaches of the Christchurch City by-laws was 334, as compared with 510 for previous year.

Sly-grog selling in this district is confined chiefly to Ashburton and Oamaru, as these are towns in no-license districts. The difficulties which beset the local police in procuring evidence in such cases are well known, and little if any assistance can be relied on from residents, whose sympathies are with the grog-sellers. There were 36 prosecutions during the year, as against 16 the previous year. Convictions were obtained against 28 persons, and fines were inflicted amounting in the aggregate to £420.

The conduct of the men with a few exceptions has been satisfactory.

INSPECTOR O'BRIEN, DUNEDIN DISTRICT.

The number of offences reported during the year was 2,029, as compared with 1,740 for the previous year; and the number of persons arrested or proceeded against by summons during the year was 1,853. This shows an increase of 289 offences for the year, many of which may be attributed to the conduct of juveniles, there being, however, an increase of 141 in drunkenness. The latter I attribute to the continued prosperity and high wages ruling in the district during the year.

The principal increases during the year were—Burglary, 15; disobeying orders of Court, 49; indecent exposure, 15; mischief, 20; vagrancy, 20: while a decrease is shown in sly-grog selling, 10; stone-throwing, 10; theft as bailee, 16; and trespass, 13.

On the 31st March last the strength of the Force in this district was—1 Inspector, 1 Sub-Inspector, 1 station-sergeant, 11 sergeants, 74 constables, 1 Chief Detective, 2 detectives, 3 acting-detectives, 2 district constables, and 1 matron.

The casualties were—Retired under Police Provident Fund Act, nil; died, 1; dismissed, nil; discharged on resignation, 7.

There has been an increase of 141 in the number of persons dealt with for drunkenness during the year under review. This may be attributed to continued prosperity and high wages ruling for the working-classes. Juvenile drunkenness has from time to time been the subject of comment by the local Press, both anonymous and otherwise. I am satisfied from my personal observations and from facts gathered from the officers serving under me that much of the offence referred to is more apparent than real. It must, however, be stated that youths between the ages of eighteen and twenty-one years are occasionally found to be actually intoxicated, which is much to be regretted. I am therefore of opinion that, in the interests of the youths themselves, no liquor should be sold to them till they have attained the age of twenty-one years.

There have been 13 prosecutions for sly-grog selling during the year, and fines aggregating £290 have been imposed. As regards that portion of the Clutha District (no-license area) in this police district, I have much pleasure in stating there has been but 1 prosecution during the year, and there is evidence of the offence being reduced to a minimum. There have been 9 prosecutions for gaming offences during the year, and since the Gaming and Lotteries Act of last session came into force there has been a considerable diminution in the worst phases of the offence—namely, frequenting offices for the purpose of betting and wagering on the result of horse-races, street betting, and that infatuating game known as “two up.” Jockey clubs are observing the law in respect of totalisators, and the licensing of respectable bookmakers has so far given satisfaction. On the 31st December last the administration of the Infant Life Protection Act was transferred from the Police to the Education Department. The existing infant-homes (59) and their inmates were then in a satisfactory condition.

Licensed hotels have, with very few exceptions, been well conducted during the year; and there seems to be a disposition on the part of the majority of licensees to observe the law to the letter, and in this connection the amendment of the licensing law making it an offence for persons who are not lodgers to be found on such premises during the time they are directed to be closed has been found most beneficial. There have been 10 prosecutions against hotelkeepers during the year, resulting in 5 convictions.

Sunday trading in shops is not so prevalent as hitherto. There have been 7 prosecutions for such offences during the year, resulting in 6 convictions. I am still of opinion that in order to more effectually check this class of Sunday trading the penalty should be increased from £1 to £5.