

The detection of sly-grog sellers at Ashburton and Oamaru requires extra vigilance of the police. The total amount of fines for sly-grog selling during the year was £335. The conduct of the men as a rule has been satisfactory.

INSPECTOR O'BRIEN, DUNEDIN DISTRICT.

The number of offences reported during the year was 2,213, as compared with 2,029 for the previous year, showing an increase of 184; and the number of persons arrested or proceeded against by summons during the year 1908 was 2,033. I regret to have to say that juveniles are again responsible for many of these offences.

The offence of drunkenness shows an increase of 114 as compared with the preceding year; apart from that, there is no marked increase or decrease in any other class of offence, and nothing calling for special comment.

There have been 13 prosecutions for gaming offences during the year. Since the passing of the new gaming laws one of the most objectionable phases of this offence—namely, street betting—has considerably diminished. Resorting to offices for the purposes of betting and wagering has, apparently, entirely ceased. The infatuating game known as "two-up" still goes on, but mostly in remote and isolated places, and chiefly on Sundays and holidays.

Hotels in this district have, with very few exceptions, been very well conducted during the year. The majority of the licensees appear to realise that it is in their own interests to comply with the licensing laws; there are, however, a few, chiefly in country places, who still show a tendency to violate the law, particularly in respect of after-hour and Sunday trading. There have been 23 prosecutions against hotelkeepers during the year, resulting in 12 convictions.

During the year there have been 9 prosecutions for sly-grog selling, and fines aggregating £235 5s. have been imposed. In the no-license area (Clutha district) sly-grog selling still prevails, but only to a limited extent. It is, however, very rarely that drunken persons are seen in this district, except those travelling by train.

A new station was opened at Ranfurly on the 3rd November last, and on the 1st October last one was opened at St. Kilda. These arrangements are giving satisfaction. Since the opening of a new station at Portobello in September, 1907, complaints from that district have practically ceased.

On the 31st March the strength of the Force in this district was 1 Inspector, 1 Sub-Inspector, 1 station sergeant, 11 sergeants, 74 constables, 2 district constables, 1 chief detective, 4 detectives, 1 acting-detective, and 1 matron.

Casualties: Discharged or resigned, 4 constables.

During the year the conduct of members of the Force has, with very few exceptions, been most exemplary; only in a very few cases has it been necessary to inflict punishment. Their duties are multifarious, and, on the whole, they have been performed in a satisfactory manner. The Detective Branch of the service has during the year done good work, including the detection of many offences committed during the previous year and the arrest of offenders wanted in other parts of the Dominion.

The conduct of members of this branch of the service has also been exemplary.

INSPECTOR MITCHELL, INVERCARGILL DISTRICT.

The strength of the Force in above district on the 31st March last was 1 Inspector, 4 sergeants 32 constables, 1 detective and 1 district constable.

The casualties during the year were—1 constable retired on pension, 1 constable dismissed, and 2 sergeants and 10 constables transferred to and 2 sergeants and 9 constables from other districts.

With one or two exceptions the conduct of members of the Force has been good, and their satisfactory attention to duty is evidenced by the fact that of 620 offences reported 587 were detected—about 95 per cent.

The maintenance of order in the streets of Invercargill has been very marked during the year, and the number of cases of drunkenness (68) has been few remembering the facilities that exist for legitimately obtaining liquor. In all the cases except one or two the source whence the liquor was obtained was traceable to places outside the no-license area.

The locker system is still in operation in several buildings in this town, and there can be no reasonable doubt that, as carried on, it is an evasion of the law; at the same time, it is very difficult to obtain sufficient evidence to prove its illegality.

There have been 23 convictions for sly-grog selling, resulting in several sentences of three months' imprisonment, and fines totalling £315. I am pleased to say that at the present time there is no evidence that such offences are being committed in this district to any appreciable extent.