

There have been no serious crimes committed in the district during the year to call for special mention.

I have no recommendations to make as far as any alteration in the law is concerned.

The licensing laws have been strictly enforced during the year, and sly-grog selling in no-license areas has been kept well in check.

The increase in pay and the recent promotions in the Force have given better heart and encouragement to the rank and file, and have brought about a better state of contentment in the service.

INSPECTOR WILSON, WANGANUI DISTRICT.

The authorized strength is 1 Inspector, 1 Sub-Inspector, 2 senior sergeants, 5 sergeants, 69 constables, 2 detective sergeants, 1 detective, 1 acting-detective, and 1 district constable, being an increase of two since my last report. Wanganui has had an increase of 1 constable, and a new station at Gonville accounts for the other.

The following increases are required: 1 constable at Hawera, the 2 constables already there being insufficient to meet the very many calls, escort duty, &c.

I would ask that a plain-clothes constable be sent to Wanganui, owing to the very many calls on Detective-Sergeant Siddells, whom I have frequently to send out over a very large area (between Rangitikei and Waiongora Rivers). I therefore require a young and energetic man to look after the petty thieves and spielers who visit the town from time to time—a man who could devote the whole of his time to the town, to note and generally look after suspicious arrivals. The size and growth of the town warrants this. I strongly urge that these men be given me.

I am also of opinion that another constable should be posted at Eltham, or a station opened at Kaponga in the near future.

The casualties during the year were—1 sergeant retired medically unfit, 1 constable died, 1 constable resigned, and 2 constables dismissed.

With the exception of 2 constables whose services were dispensed with, the conduct of the constables has been good, and fairly satisfactory.

The offences return shows a decrease of over 200 offences. There were substantial decreases in the number of persons charged with drunkenness, assaults, breaches of the peace, false pretences, thefts, and vagrancy. There were only 75 undetected offences, or less than 4 per cent. of the total, showing that the work of the police must be held to be fairly successful.

I am pleased to say the district has been particularly free from serious crime during the year. The Judges have invariably commented on this fact when opening the Supreme Court sessions.

In this district there are upwards of 1,800 motor-cars, motor-cycles, and motor-vehicles registered. In all the boroughs and some of the counties all vehicles must carry lights at night, but in the rest of the district there is no rule on the subject. I would suggest an amendment of the Police Offences Act, making it an offence to drive a vehicle along any public road after sunset without a light. I am sure, in view of the greatly increased traffic, as evinced by the above list of motor-vehicles, that it is necessary in the interests of public safety.

Section 7 of the Police Offences Act requires amendment. Under the first clause of section 7 a person is liable to a fine or two months' imprisonment; under subsection (3) a person is liable to six months' imprisonment, and he may claim the right to be tried by a jury. I submit all such cases should be dealt with summarily and that this contradiction should not exist.

Difficulty is frequently experienced in getting Magistrates to alter the gaol in a warrant of commitment; they say there is no authority. For instance, a man is convicted and fined 10s., or 48 hours, for drunkenness or some petty offence, and is given by the Magistrate a week to pay; he clears out, and when the warrant is issued to the police, may have gone to the other Island. When he is found he declines to pay, and has to be sent to the prison mentioned in the warrant, at a very great expense, in some cases arriving at the prison only in time to be discharged. I submit some clause should be inserted in the Justices of the Peace Act to empower a Magistrate to alter the warrant of commitment or issue the warrant in first instance to the nearest gaol when found.

There is still a small trade carried on in sly-grog selling in the prohibited area of Upper Wanganui and King-country, and there have been a number of prosecutions and convictions during the year.

As there are in nearly all towns a number of men who make books on races, and it is almost impossible for the local police to deal with such offences, perhaps it would be possible to organize a small section of the detective branch of the service to take the matter in hand through the Dominion. I feel confident it would greatly abate the trouble. I understand a scheme somewhat similar to this has been working in Victoria for some time.

INSPECTOR O'DONOVAN, NAPIER DISTRICT.

On the 10th June, 1912, I arrived on transfer from Invercargill, and took charge of Napier District, in succession to Inspector Dwyer.

The authorized strength of the Force in the district on the 31st March last was 50, the same as on the 31st March, 1912.

One sergeant was promoted to the rank of senior sergeant, and 1 detective to the rank of detective sergeant; but no further changes ensued upon these promotions.