

Sly-grog selling has shown a considerable decrease as compared with previous years, and there is every reason to believe that the substantial penalties that have been inflicted have had a good effect. The fines for sly-grog selling last year amounted to £170, as compared with £340 the previous year.

Of 32 persons committed for trial, 27 were convicted at the Supreme Court.

The population throughout the district is steadily increasing, and the whole district is in a prosperous state. Settlement is progressing in every direction, and there are no unemployed. The population of Waihi was affected considerably by the strike, but is now on the mend.

It has been held that the premises used by a wholesale dealer are not "licensed premises" within the meaning of the Licensing Act, and it is therefore no offence under that Act for the licensee to sell at all hours of the day or night, or on Sundays, so long as he does not sell less than 2 gallons, and it is no offence for a person to be found on such premises in pursuit of liquor. I think it would be an advantage if the wholesale dealers were restricted as regards hours of business the same as retail dealers, and that section 194 of the Act be made to apply also.

Under section 3, subsection (ee), of the Police Offences Act, 1908, it has been held that either an intent to provoke a breach of the peace must be proved or that a breach of the peace must actually take place before a conviction can be recorded. The consequence is that a lot of abusive language and conduct can be used in a public place to the serious annoyance of respectable citizens, and the only remedy is by way of application for sureties. I think it would be a distinct advantage if the section was amended by omitting all words after "passers by."

INSPECTOR NORWOOD, INVERCARGILL DISTRICT.

The authorized strength of the district on the 31st March last was: 1 Inspector, 4 sergeants, 32 constables, 1 detective sergeant, 1 acting-detective, and 1 district constable.

During the year there has been no alteration in the strength or disposition of the men in the district.

The casualties were 1 death, 1 dismissal, and 1 voluntary resignation.

I am of the opinion that the time has arrived for stationing a constable at Tokonui. The necessity for this was fully gone into in my predecessor's annual report for last year.

Tenders for new police-stations at Maitara and Tapanui were advertised for in 1912, but there is no indication of any commencement being made to build. Both stations are badly required. The constables at both places are living in rented houses.

During the year ending the 31st December, 1912, 713 offences were reported, as against 697 the previous year, an increase of 16. Of the 713 cases reported, arrests or summonses resulted in 673 cases. The principal decreases occur under the following headings: Drunkenness, 42; sly-grog cases, 20; disorderly conduct, 17; vagrancy, 8. The principal increases were assaults, 5; breaches of the peace, 7; burglary, breaking and entering, 27; deserting vessels, 7; failing to provide, 21; illegally on premises, 8; theft, 18. The increase in the number of burglary and breaking-and-entering cases, and also theft, is accounted for by the unusual number of youths who committed these offences and were dealt with in the Juvenile Court. All the cases dealt with were of the usual kind, and none of them warrant any special comment.

The amount of fines inflicted for sly-grog selling during the year amounted to £106. Several offenders were also sent to gaol without the option of a fine.

The conduct of the men, with one or two exceptions, has been excellent. In 3 instances fines were inflicted for breaches of the regulations.

Both the detective and uniform branches have been most assiduous in the performance of their duties. They have worked in harmony for the good of the service, with the best results.

There has not been a large increase of population in the district during the year. Invercargill and Gore are probably the only places where there has been an appreciable increase. The inauguration of the tramway service at Invercargill has caused an impetus of population in the suburbs, and it will not be long before additional police will be required to ensure a systematic patrol in the thickly populated parts in the outskirts.

The district has received a serious set-back by the extensive floods which took place on the 28th and 29th March, resulting in the drowning of two settlers. The police-stations at Gore, Maitara, Wyndham, and Otatau all had from 1 ft. to 3 ft. of water in the buildings, causing damage to furniture and effects.

INSPECTOR PHAIR, GREYMOUTH DISTRICT.

The strength of the Force in this district on the 31st March last was 1 Inspector, 2 senior sergeants, 3 sergeants, 36 constables, and 1 detective sergeant, being 1 constable short of the authorized strength of 44 allowed for this district.

No new stations were opened in this district during the past year, but a new station, now nearing completion, at Cobden will be opened shortly. New police buildings at Murchison have also been erected during the year, and are at present occupied by the constable there.

During the past year 1 constable resigned, voluntarily. There were no other casualties.