

gum-diggers, the Maori women being supplied as well as the men, and that frequent drunken orgies is the result. It is very difficult for the police to get sufficient evidence to justify a prosecution, owing to the reluctance of any of the persons living in these camps to give evidence against the offenders. The wine sent to these camps is mostly composed of a raw cheap spirit mixed with newly made wine, the drinking of which concoction is said to drive the consumers mad for the time being. I beg to recommend that legislation be passed prohibiting the sale of New-Zealand-made wine at any place except at the place where it has been produced and on licensed premises. This would at once do away with the depot evil on the gumfields.

The present strength of the Force is not sufficient to enable me to adequately police certain cities and country places. Local bodies, private citizens, and officers of the Police Force make frequent appeals for more police, especially in North Island centres where the population is increasing rapidly. I am asking that provision be made on this year's estimates for increasing the Force by an additional fifty constables, and if this number is provided for it will be possible to meet the more urgent police needs of many localities.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS IN CHARGE OF DISTRICTS.

Extracts from the annual reports of the officers in charge of districts are hereto annexed.

J. CULLEN,

Commissioner of Police.

EXTRACTS FROM ANNUAL REPORTS OF OFFICERS IN CHARGE OF DISTRICTS.

SUPERINTENDENT ELLISON, WELLINGTON DISTRICT.

I beg to furnish the following report upon this Police District for the year ending 31st March, 1914:—

On the 31st March, 1913, the authorized strength of the district was 156, and on the 31st March last the authorized strength was 168, an increase of 12. The actual strength was 166, owing to a transfer and a death a few days previously. The addition of 12 constables was for Wellington City, three being added to make up for 3 men engaged on "point duty" under arrangement with the City Council, and 9 were added last month so as to enable all beats to be worked when there are no absentees.

The only increases which at present appear to be required during the ensuing year will be provision for resident constables at Miramar Peninsula, and about the junction of Kelburne and Northland, and two additional constables for Mount Cook Station. The strength of that station should be 22 constables, so as to work all the beats and give the constant attention to Government House grounds which is demanded and necessary.

Population is steadily increasing both at Kelburne and Northland, and also at Miramar, so that it will soon be advisable to have one station established for the two former places and one for Miramar.

No stations were opened or closed during the year, but new buildings, including sergeant's residence, lockup, and offices, all in brick, were recently erected at Masterton, where the accommodation had previously been very bad.

During the year 6 constables were discharged on resignation; 1 was dismissed; 1 senior sergeant, 1 sergeant, and 2 constables retired on pension; and 1 constable lost his life in the execution of his duty.

The offences return for the year ending 31st December, 1913, shows a total number of offences reported as 6,099, as against 6,025 for the previous year, while the arrests and prosecutions were 5,873, as against 5,720 for 1912, thus leaving 226 offences unaccounted for. Those unaccounted for include 88 thefts, 3 assaults, 22 housebreaking and theft, 43 deserters from merchant vessels, 35 for failing to provide maintenance and disobeying orders of Court, and 16 industrial-school absconders.

Increases appear under the headings of—Abusive or threatening behaviour, 41; assaults, 62; assaults on police, 13; breaches of peace, 15; burglary and housebreaking, 41 (the arrests under this head exceeded by 19 the total number of similar offences reported in 1912); carnally knowing young girls, 5; deserters from merchant ships, 35; disobeying orders on board ship, 78; escaping from legal custody, 11; forgery and uttering, 13; gaming offences, 69; illegally on premises, 18; indecent behaviour, 14; obscene language, 21; neglected children, 17; perjury, 8; sureties of peace, 26; theft, 42; and vagrancy, 23.

Decreases appear under—Abortion, 5; absconders from bail, 5; detaining postal packets, 9; disobeying orders of Court and failing to provide, 35; drunkenness, 421; false pretences, 7; mischief and malicious injury, 25; sly-grog selling, 4; sodomy and attempts, 4; stowaways on ships, 22; thefts by servants, 23; thefts of horses and cattle, 4.

One charge of murder of a child resulted in acquittal. The offence was alleged to have occurred in Christchurch, and the child's body was disposed of here.

Leaving aside the case of murder, there were no very serious crimes calling for special reference during the past year. A number of the housebreaking offences were carried out by one individual, who travelled to several towns in the Dominion committing crimes at private houses in daytime when the occupants were absent. He was ultimately secured and convicted.

Sly-grog traffic is an offence that gives a great deal of trouble, and needs continual vigilance to keep in check. It is carried on in large centres of population on Sundays when hotels are closed, as well as in no-license areas. There is probably no offence in which more ingenuity is exercised in order to defeat the law, and many people who would give evidence regarding ordinary