

During the year the following increases were authorized: 1 Sub-Inspector and 1 constable at Gisborne, 1 sergeant at Napier, 1 constable at Spit, and 1 constable for the newly appointed station at Nuhaka. These additions to the strength were much needed, and are fully appreciated.

An addition of 1 constable at Dannevirke is still required, and a new station should be opened at Te Araroa.

A new station has been opened at Nuhaka. No stations have been closed during the year.

At Te Araroa a new and more central site than the one previously held was reserved for police purposes during the year.

There were no resignations or dismissals during the year.

One constable is on three months' leave prior to retirement on superannuation, having reached the age-limit.

The total number of offences reported during the year 1914 was 2,214, as compared with 2,103 for 1913, showing an increase of 111 for the year. Of the 2,214 offences reported 2,119 resulted in prosecutions, leaving a total of 95 undetected offences. Over 95 per cent. of all offences reported were detected.

The following are the principal increases and decreases: Increases—Arson, 9; assaults, common, 8; burglary, 19; disorderly conduct, 11; drunkenness, 34; gaming offences, 14; neglected and criminal children, 17; obscene and profane language, 13; theft (undescribed), 23; theft of cattle and horses, 8; trespass, 13. Decreases—Breaches of the peace, 26; false pretences, 14; forgery, 7; malicious injury to property, 11; refusing to quit licensed premises, 10; vagrancy, 7.

The conduct of the police throughout the year has been good, and the men have willingly responded to the call for the performance of extra duties required of them owing to the absence of their comrades on sickness and leave at different times.

The Licensing Amendment Act, 1914, by prohibiting the sale of liquor on licensed premises to persons under the age of twenty-one years, has had the effect of checking intemperance and larrikinism amongst youths who were in the habit of procuring liquor at hotels, drinking it in the streets, and then making themselves a nuisance to the public generally—a practice that had become quite common, especially in some of the large towns.

Section 32 of the Police Force Act, 1913, which gives a Magistrate power to order goods taken possession of by the police, and the ownership of which is doubtful, to be delivered to the person whom he considers entitled to their possession, has proved convenient and satisfactory.

I think the Pawnbrokers Act should be amended by giving the police the same authority to examine pawnbrokers' pledge-books as they now possess in respect of second-hand dealers' books. Generally speaking, the pawnbrokers give the police all the assistance in their power in tracing stolen property and bringing offenders to justice, but there are some exceptions with whom it is difficult to deal effectually in the absence of authority to inspect the pledge-books.

It is very difficult to detect persons supplying liquor to Maoris in the back country in contravention of the licensing law, but if the Maoris were liable to a penalty for procuring liquor in cases where it is an offence for persons to supply them it would greatly assist in the suppression of this objectionable traffic. I suggest that the licensing law should be amended accordingly. This would place the Maoris in a no worse position than prohibited Europeans.

INSPECTOR PHAIR, GREYMOUTH DISTRICT.

I have the honour to submit a report upon the Greymouth Police District for the year ended the 31st March, 1915.

The strength of the Force in this district on the said date was 1 Inspector, 1 senior sergeant, 4 sergeants, and 36 constables, total 42, being 1 detective and 1 constable short of the authorized strength. No increase was made to the strength during the past year.

No new stations were opened or closed during the year, although new buildings were erected at Charleston and Murchison, while the building at Ahaura in course of erection is nearly completed.

During the year 4 constables resigned and 1 detective sergeant retired on pension. Seven constables were charged with eighteen breaches of the Police Regulations, and fines totalling £10 10s. were imposed. With these exceptions the conduct of the members of the Force during the year has been good.

The offences return for the year ended the 31st December last shows 893 offences reported during the year, being an increase of 121 offences over the previous year. This increase is attributable principally to petty offences—viz., drunkenness, gaming, common assaults, and breaches of the peace. Many of these offences were reported from Waiuta, where an accommodation license was granted during the year. This township formerly had no licensed premises therein. Strict measures have been adopted by the constable in charge for the suppression of drunkenness and disorderly conduct of any kind—hence the increase. Prosecutions were instituted in 852 cases out of the 893 reported, leaving 41 undetected, which I submit is a satisfactory result. Thirty-two informations were laid against publicans and 25 convictions were obtained during the year, as against 35 prosecutions and 21 convictions for the previous year.

No serious offences were reported during the year. A suspicious fire took place at Taylorville on the 26th January last, resulting in the total destruction of a hotel and two stores. An inquest was opened on this fire on the 12th February and the evidence of a number of witnesses taken, and the inquest was adjourned *sine die* to allow of further police inquiries being made. This is at present being attended to.