

also appear in offences usually associated with drunkenness—viz., indecent behaviour, malicious injury to property, obscene language, and obstructing and resisting police. I ascribe this decrease of drunkenness to the result of the anti-shouting regulations recently brought into operation under the War Regulations Act, which have been the means of greatly decreasing disorderly conduct in public places by curtailing the consumption of liquor.

The conduct of all ranks has been generally good; in two cases constables charged with serious breaches of Police Regulations were dismissed, and in several other cases fines were inflicted.

The officers and sergeants throughout the district have maintained a good standard of discipline and zeal, and all ranks have cheerfully carried out extra duties imposed on them by the condition of war. There has been a considerable shortage of constables owing to so many resigning to go to the front and the difficulty in replacing them. As a consequence many of the men have been unable to obtain their annual leave. The large number of inquiries sent to the Police for attention by other Government Departments, with a reduced staff to cope with it, has made it impossible to relieve the men from their duties.

I beg to recommend an amendment to the Licensing Act in the following direction. At present it is an offence for persons under twenty-one years of age to be supplied with liquor by persons holding licenses under the Licensing Act, but this provision does not apply to the purchase of beer from breweries. As the law stands at present a person under twenty-one cannot obtain a glass of beer at an hotel, but he can purchase 2 gallons at a brewery. This latter custom is prevalent in no-license areas; youths usually subscribe 1s. each and purchase 2 gallons of beer, very often with disastrous results.

SUPERINTENDENT DWYER, CHRISTCHURCH DISTRICT.

The actual strength of the Force in the district on the 31st March, 1917, was 140, made up as follows: 1 Superintendent, 2 Sub-Inspectors, 3 senior sergeants, 13 sergeants, 110 constables, 1 Chief Detective, 5 detective-sergeants, 3 detectives, and 2 acting-detectives. In addition there were 2 matrons and 1 surgeon.

During the year 1 constable was dismissed, and 2 constables resigned for the purpose of joining the Expeditionary Forces. The Police Surgeon, Dr. Westenra, died, and Dr. Crooke was appointed to fill the vacancy.

The conduct of the sergeants and constables has, on the whole, been good. One sergeant was reduced in grade and sent back to the ranks, and 3 constables were fined for breaches of the regulations. A great deal of extra work has been imposed upon the police by the operation of the Military Service Act, and this has been carried out both cheerfully and well.

The number of offences reported during the year ending 31st December, 1916, was 3,978, as compared with 4,110 in 1915. Of the 3,978 offences reported, in 3,781 cases persons were apprehended or summoned. The principal increases in the various classes of offences during the year were—Burglary, 13; cruelty to animals, 19; disobeying orders of the Court, 114; gaming offences, 17; forgery, 8; neglected and criminal children, 19; sly-grog selling, 17; and thefts of all kinds, 89. The principal decreases were—Common assaults, 31; breaches of the peace, 24; drunkenness, 159; failing to provide for wives and children, 48; obscene and profane language, 24; and vagrancy, 82. The largest decrease is shown in drunkenness, and this can safely be put down to the restrictions placed on the sale of liquor by the anti-treating legislation.

SUPERINTENDENT WRIGHT, DUNEDIN DISTRICT.

The authorized strength on the 31st March, 1917, was—1 Superintendent, 1 Sub-Inspector, 2 senior sergeants, 10 sergeants, 89 constables, 1 Chief Detective, 1 detective-sergeant, 1 detective, 1 matron, and 1 surgeon.

There has been no increase or decrease in the strength during the year, and the only increase I recommend for the coming year is one constable at Dunedin. This is necessary owing to the police having taken over the administration of the Gaol here, which takes the full time of two constables.

New quarters at Caversham have been built, and that station now is all that can be desired. At the Central Station the police have removed from the old quarters to the Gaol, which has been altered to suit, and now supplies ample accommodation for the present and future.

At South Dunedin we have taken over the old post-office, which is being converted into a convenient watch-house, office, &c., and will afford sufficient accommodation for years to come.

During the year 1 sergeant and 2 constables have retired on superannuation, 1 senior sergeant and 1 constable retired medically unfit, 6 constables resigned (3 of whom enlisted in the Expeditionary Force), and 1 sergeant died.

The conduct of the police in all branches has been excellent, and their evident desire to cope willingly with the enormous amount of extra work which has been thrown upon the Force in connection with the war has been most commendable. What with inquiries respecting returned soldiers, inquiries for shirkers and deserters, making inquiries for Military Service Boards, and many other inquiries too numerous to mention, the police have had a busy time.

The offence return for 1916 shows that 2,319 offences were reported, as against 2,417 for the previous year, showing a decrease of 98 offences. The decrease is principally accounted for under the following heads: Discharging firearms, 22; disobeying orders of Court, 20; drunkenness, 19; escaping from custody, 12; mischief, 13; opium offences, 16; and thefts, 81. There have been increases under the heads of—assaults, 12; assaults on police, 9; disorderly conduct, 11;