

furious riding and driving, 49; gaming offences, 37; indecency, 33; neglected and criminal children, 50; obscene and profane language, 27; theft (undescribed), 14; theft by servants, 23; vagrancy offences, 63.

It will be noticed that the greatest number of cases showing a decrease under a particular heading is that of drunkenness, 556 cases. In the preceding year the decrease was 782. This succeeding decrease is no doubt, in the main, accounted for by the anti-shouting regulations and early closing provisions.

The conduct of all ranks has been generally good. Two constables were dismissed for serious offences against the Police Regulations, and fines had to be inflicted in several other minor cases.

All ranks have been kept extremely busily engaged. The number of inquiries emanating from the military authorities has been very numerous, and at times it has been difficult to cope with them. Constables resigning to go to the front have been replaced by untrained men, consequently efficiency has suffered to some extent.

#### INSPECTOR CRUICKSHANK, GREYMOUTH DISTRICT.

On the 31st March last the actual strength of this district was 1 Inspector, 2 senior sergeants, 3 sergeants, 35 constables, and 1 detective-sergeant; total, 42. This number was 3 constables short of the authorized strength. The three vacancies are for constables at Waiuta, Otira, and Greymouth, but only the latter vacancy requires filling at present—the two former can wait until the war is over.

For the year 1917 only 412 offences were reported, as against 571 in preceding year, being a decrease of 159. The decrease includes 68 for drunkenness, the balance being petty cases which are not of sufficient importance to call for comment. Over 96 per cent. of all offences reported were accounted for either by arrest or summons, which is satisfactory.

The conduct of all ranks of the Force in this district has been satisfactory, and only in two instances had fines to be inflicted for breaches of the Police Regulations.

On the 9th November last, while John Coulthard, William Hall, and Isaac Angelo James were proceeding to the State Coal-mine in a motor-car with the miners' pay, amounting to £3,659 16s. 8d., the car was stuck up by an obstruction placed on the road, and at the same moment a man dressed in dungaree suit, wearing a mask, and carrying a revolver in each hand, jumped from cover, shot Coulthard dead, mortally wounded Hall, and wounded James. The murderer stole the money and then made off, the whole occurrence occupying only a few seconds. The country is covered by dense bush and scrub. The crime was well planned and boldly carried out, and the disguise worn left no clue as to identity of the offender. Detective-Sergeant Ward, who was early on the scene, showed great energy, zeal, and activity, and other police assistance arrived later. As a result of inquiries, a man named Frederick William Eggers was arrested in Christchurch on the 15th November, and nearly all the stolen money recovered. He has since been convicted and executed for the crime. The investigation of this crime leading up to the arrest and conviction of a cunning, callous, and desperate criminal reflects the greatest credit on the police as a whole, and especially on those engaged thereon.

#### SUPERINTENDENT DWYER, CHRISTCHURCH DISTRICT.

The actual strength of the Force in the district on the 31st March, 1918, was 136 men, made up as follows: 1 Superintendent, 2 Sub-Inspectors, 5 senior sergeants, 12 sergeants, 102 permanent constables, 5 temporary constables, 1 Chief Detective, 4 detective-sergeants, and 4 detectives.

During the year 6 permanent constables resigned from the Force (2 to join the Army), and 2 temporary constables also resigned; 1 senior sergeant, 1 Chief Detective, and 1 constable retired from the service on superannuation.

Seven constables were fined for breaches of the regulations, otherwise the conduct of the sergeants and constables has been excellent.

There are some police buildings in the district that badly need exterior painting, as some of them have not been touched for years, and it is hardly a wise policy to leave them run so long without doing something to protect them from the ravages of the weather.

The number of offences reported during the year 1917 was 3,480, as compared with 3,978 in 1916. The principal increases in the various classes during the year were—Assaults (indecent), 12; breaches of the peace, 27; disobeying orders of Court and summonses, 51; disorderly and riotous conduct, 22; thefts from dwellings, 22; disorderly houses and brothels, 20. The principal decreases were—Abusive and threatening language, 17; drunkenness, 481; gaming offences, 52; and obscene and profane language, 41.

The only serious crimes worthy of mention were the murder of a young woman at View Hill, for which a man receive a life sentence; and the murder of a child four years of age at Addington. The mother of the child was charged with having committed the crime, but was acquitted.

I would recommend that the Second-hand Dealers Act, 1908, be amended so as to apply to bicycle-dealers; this would enable the police to cope more effectively with bicycle-stealing, a class of offence that is becoming very prevalent in Christchurch. Since the restriction on shipping certain bicycle-parts have become very difficult to obtain, and of late it has been frequently found that stolen bicycles have been stripped of certain parts and then abandoned, and it has been suggested that these parts are readily purchased by bicycle-dealers and bicycle-repairers, and that some of them, at any rate, are making big profits out of the business.