

During the year 11 constables were dealt with for breaches of the Police Regulations, otherwise the conduct of all ranks has been good.

The duties devolving on the men during the late epidemic were very trying and often repulsive, but I am pleased to be able to bear testimony to the able and willing manner in which all those members of the Force who were not stricken down coped with the many urgent calls made on them during the anxious time, particularly during the earlier period of the epidemic. Their conduct during this period evoked praise from the public, and a number of letters in appreciation of services rendered by the police were received from local bodies.

There has been considerable difficulty for some months past in keeping the ranks up to their normal strength, but this trouble should now disappear as a result of the increased pay and allowances recently announced by the Department.

INSPECTOR CRUICKSHANK, GREYMOUTH DISTRICT.

On the 31st March last the strength of this district was—1 Inspector, 2 Senior Sergeants, 4 sergeants, 32 constables, 1 detective-sergeant: total, 40, being 6 constables short of the authorized strength of the district.

Two constables died during the year as a result of the influenza epidemic, 1 constable resigned voluntarily, and 1 constable was dismissed.

The offences return for 1918 shows that 396 offences were reported, as compared with 412 in 1917—a net decrease of 16 offences. This decrease is chiefly accounted for under the headings of—Assaults, 8; deserting or absenting from merchant vessels, 10; drunkenness, 50; theft (undescribed), 11; vagrancy, 7. There have been increases under the headings of—Gaming offences, 14; malicious injury to property, 13; neglected and criminal children, 21; theft from dwellings, 8. These do not exceed the usual fluctuations experienced from year to year, and call for no remarks. Of the total number of offences reported, 378 have been accounted for either by arrest or summons, leaving 18 undetected or abandoned through insufficient evidence. No crimes of such a serious nature as to require comment have been committed during the year.

With the exception of very frequent strikes at the coal-mines the district has been very orderly.

The conduct of all ranks during the year has been very good, only one constable having been fined for breaches of the regulations; the same constable, having again committed himself, was dismissed from the Service. Although reduced in numbers and hindered by sickness, all ranks have done their very best cheerfully to cope with the extra duties devolving on the police during the war.

SUPERINTENDENT DWYER, CHRISTCHURCH DISTRICT.

The actual strength of the Force in the district on the 31st March, 1919, was 136 men, made up as follows: 1 Superintendent, 2 Sub-Inspectors, 5 Senior Sergeants, 13 sergeants, 95 permanent constables, 11 temporary constables, 1 Chief Detective, 5 detective-sergeants, 3 detectives, 3 matrons, and 1 surgeon. The district is thus 17 permanent constables short of the authorized strength as before the war.

The casualties in the district during the year were as follows: 5 permanent constables and 3 temporary constables resigned, 1 sergeant and 1 constable retired from the Force on superannuation, 1 constable retired as medically unfit, 2 temporary constables were dismissed from the Force, and 2 permanent constables died of influenza.

The number of offences reported during the year ending 31st December, 1918, was 2,996, as compared with 3,480 in 1917. The principal increases in the various classes of offences during the year were—Burglary, 9; disobeying orders of the Court and summonses, 29; indecent exposure and behaviour, 11; obscene language, 22; obstructing police, 12; sly-grog selling, 10. The principal decreases were—Absconding from industrial schools, 59; indecent assaults, 22; breaches of the peace, 30; drunkenness, 254; false pretences, 23; illegally on premises, 23; keeping disorderly houses and brothels, 13; thefts (undescribed), 73; thefts from dwellings, 15; vagrancy, 43.

Nine constables were fined during the year for breaches of the Police Regulations, otherwise the conduct of the sergeants, constables, and detectives stationed in the district was exemplary. The year just closed proved a trying and arduous one for all ranks; a great many sergeants and constables were stricken with influenza, but those who escaped the epidemic stuck to their posts and carried out the extra duties cast upon them with everlasting credit to themselves.

There were no serious crimes committed in the district during the year calling for special mention.

I would again draw attention to the necessity for applying the provisions of the Second-hand Dealers Act to all bicycle-dealers, as the traffic that is carried on by some of these dealers in stolen bicycles is becoming a very serious matter, and it would materially help the police in their work of prevention and detection if bicycle-dealers had to obtain a license in the same manner that second-hand dealers have to do, and keep a book in which all bicycles bought or exchanged were recorded.

SUPERINTENDENT WRIGHT, DUNEDIN DISTRICT.

The authorized strength on the 31st March last was—1 Superintendent, 1 Sub-Inspector, 2 Senior Sergeants, 11 sergeants, 86 constables, 1 Chief Detective, 2 detective-sergeants, 2 detectives, 2 matrons, and 1 surgeon, making a total of 109.

There has been no increase or decrease in the authorized strength during the year, and there is no need to alter the existing distribution, but I recommend the following increases, for the reasons set forth, viz.: 1 constable at Central Station, Dunedin, to assist in looking after prisoners (at present two are employed, and the number of men available for ordinary duty is thereby decreased