

highest praise for the help they rendered the Public Health Department and local authorities in the noble work of helping and attending the sick, Europeans and Natives alike.

One constable retired medically unfit, and three permanent and two temporary constables resigned during the year.

The offences return for 1918 shows that 1,562 offences were reported, as compared with 1,556 for the previous year—an increase of 6. Increases appear under the following principal heads: Abusive and threatening behaviour, 20; assaults (common), 10; assaults (indecent), 12; breaches of the peace, 10; malicious injury to property, 20; mischief, 14; obscene language, 14; sly-grog selling, 19. Decreases appear under the following heads: Counselling the commission of an offence, 12; drunkenness, 61; false pretences, 18; forgery, 17; theft, 18; theft from dwellings, 11; vagrancy, 18. In one case an offender was charged with causing grievous bodily harm, the charge being subsequently altered to murder. Offender, who was the father of a child of tender years, gouged out the child's eyes with a fork. The unfortunate man, who appeared to be insane, was found by a jury to be mentally defective and committed to a mental hospital. The other cases are of the ordinary type and call for no special mention.

Drunkenness shows a decrease of 61, which I attribute to the six o'clock closing coming into force, and after having a fair trial I have no hesitation in saying that this restriction is one of the great factors in bringing about such a large decrease in drunkenness.

Out of the 1,562 offences reported 1,498, or over 95 per cent., were accounted for either by arrest or summons.

Sly-grog selling is still rife in parts of the King-country, notwithstanding the heavy penalties inflicted on the culprits when detected; but owing to the large profits made in the illicit sales, no matter how active the police are in endeavouring to cope with it, the trade is still carried on. Fines amounting to £569 were imposed during the year for sly-grog selling.

Members of the Force in this district have conducted themselves in a highly praiseworthy manner during the past year, and only one constable was punished for a breach of discipline. So far as I am aware, no friction of any kind existed, and during the epidemic everything possible was done to assist the sufferers in their time of need.

INSPECTOR McGRATH, NAPIER DISTRICT.

On the 31st March the authorized strength of district was 69 of all ranks. The total is made up as follows: 1 Inspector, 1 Sub-Inspector, 1 Senior Sergeant, 7 sergeants, 52 constables, 1 detective-sergeant, 2 detectives, and 4 temporary constables.

I would recommend that a new station be established at Petane, taking in a considerable portion of the present Taradale district, which is much too large to be adequately supervised by one constable. The Taradale constable, although a good active man, is now quite unable to cope with the work of the district owing to the greatly increased and widely scattered population. The Nuhaka Station, which was temporarily closed on the 11th March, 1918, should be reopened as early as possible, the place being too far from Wairoa to be satisfactorily policed from there. A site for the new station has been secured at Nuhaka.

There were no deaths or dismissals, but six constables resigned during the year.

The offences return shows that the total number of offences reported was 1,811, being an increase of 209 over that of the preceding year. There were 1,719 prosecutions, leaving only 92 offences, nearly all trivial ones, undetected.

The principal increases were—Breaches of the peace, 23; burglary, breaking into shops, dwellings, &c., 22; drunkenness, 43; failing to provide adequate maintenance for wives, &c., 30; gaming offences, 15; maliciously killing or maiming animals, 35; obscene and profane language, 14; theft (undescribed), 71. Decreases—Abusive, insulting, or threatening words or behaviour, 23; disobeying order of Court and summons, 12; mischief, 13; theft of pigs, 12; vagrancy offences, 21.

There has been no serious crime calling for special mention.

The general conduct of the Force, with very few exceptions, has been good. The detective and uniform branches of the service have worked well together with very good results. Exceptionally good work has been performed by all members of the Force stationed on the east coast in enforcing compliance with licensing laws regarding the supplying of liquor to Natives. The police succeeded in securing many convictions, and heavy fines were imposed, with the result that the traffic has greatly diminished.

Many cases have occurred during the past year which emphasize the necessity for giving effect to the suggestion made in my last annual report—viz., that using horses or vehicles without the permission of the owner should be made an offence.

INSPECTOR HENDREY, WANGANUI DISTRICT.

The authorized strength of the district is—1 Inspector, 1 Sub-Inspector, 2 Senior Sergeants, 4 sergeants, 47 constables, 1 detective-sergeant, and 1 detective; total, 57 of all ranks. There are at present 3 constables short of authorized strength—1 at Wanganui, 1 at Taihape, and 1 at Stratford. These men are badly required to man the stations named.

Owing to local conditions and the growth of the shipping, &c., at Moturoa, New Plymouth, a constable is required there for duty, and I would strongly recommend that a station be opened at Moturoa as early as possible.

No new station has been opened in the district during the past twelve months, and no stations have been closed; but in the month of August last eleven stations were cut off from this district in the formation of the Palmerston North district.