

found in gaming-house (72). The increases are only what might be expected considering the increase of population during the year, and do not indicate any abnormal growth of crime in the district, which has, with few exceptions, been comparatively free from crime of a serious nature.

Of the total number of offences reported, 96 per cent. have been accounted for either by arrest or summons.

At the Supreme Court 160 persons were committed for trial or sentence, of whom 118 were subsequently convicted.

There were 18 prosecutions for sly-grog selling, resulting in 16 convictions, during the year, a decrease of 7 cases as compared with the previous year.

The conduct of the police during the year has been very satisfactory, and although an enormous amount of extra work has been thrown upon them in consequence of the war and resulting regulations it has been well and cheerfully performed. Complaints from the public against members of the Force have been exceedingly rare, and there have been none of a serious nature.

Recruiting of late has improved, but the pay does not attract as many as desired owing to the high wages ruling outside the Force.

A serious matter that affects the efficiency of the Force is the difficulty married men have in obtaining houses both in the city and country towns, and I think the time has arrived when proper provision should be made for purchasing suitable properties in all towns where the police are likely to be permanently required. Members of the Force on transfer have the greatest difficulty in obtaining even second-rate and unsuitable dwellings, and the difficulty of carrying out transfers which are essential to the proper government of the service is a serious drawback.

INSPECTOR SHEEHAN, HAMILTON DISTRICT.

The authorized strength on the 31st March, 1920, was—1 Inspector, 3 Senior Sergeants, 1 detective-sergeant, 5 sergeants, 61 constables, 2 Native constables, 1 district constable.

No increase in strength has taken place during the year, and, owing to the shortage of men to fill vacancies, headquarters station is working two men short of its strength, and Waihi Station is in the same position.

Increases in strength are required as follows:—

Hamilton Station, one detective. A second detective is required to cope with the increasing important inquiry work.

Frankton Junction, one constable. As pointed out last year, a second constable is much required owing to the large increase in railway traffic, and for the patrolling of the portion of borough which is becoming thickly populated.

Rotorua Station, one constable. With the addition of one constable to the present staff a proper system of night duty could be carried out, as it cannot be done with the present staff. I would urge the necessity of this addition at this station.

A sergeant should be stationed at Tauranga in charge of that subdistrict, and unless some alteration is made in respect of the Court work at Whakatane a sergeant will also be required there in the near future.

A permanent constable is much required at Taneatua since the granting of an accommodation license at that place over a year ago, and in view of the construction of large railway-works in connection with the East Coast Railway and the prospects of opening up bush lands in the neighbourhood shortly. The Urewera country is also easiest of access through Taneatua.

A new station is very much required at Matamata. The population is increasing rapidly, and the district is highly progressive. The Department possesses land suitable for building on in the township.

With the increasing land-settlement and railway-construction works in progress Ohura will soon require the services of a constable.

Piopio is also a centre where the services of a permanent constable will shortly be required.

There is also the question of the hydro-electric-power supply from Horahora or its vicinity. When the labour and material required for the work are obtainable and the work in full swing a large number of men will be employed in this undertaking, and I anticipate that a constable, or perhaps two, will be required where the principal camps are pitched.

One constable resigned during the year, and one district constable was retired.

The offences return for 1919 shows that 2,148 offences were reported, as compared with 1,560 for the previous year, an increase of 588. Increases appear under the following heads: Assault, 37; theft, 120; theft from dwellings, 16; false pretences, 32; house and shop breaking, 20; forgery, 7; mischief, 40; breach of the peace, 59; obscene language, 82; failing to maintain, 41; drunkenness, 116. Decreases appear under the following principal headings: Indecent acts, 9; indecent assault, 13; cruelty to animals, 20; obstructing police, 22; selling liquor without a license, 20.

The increase in the number of offences as compared with the previous year is large. A large proportion of the offences under the headings "Theft," "Theft from dwellings," and "Shop-breaking" was committed by gangs of boys who for some time successfully covered up their acts but in the end were detected and dealt with. The general increase may be ascribed to the increase of population throughout the whole district, and the increase in the amount of construction-works in progress employing large numbers of men.

During the year the district has been very free of offences coming under the heading of serious crime.

Sly-grog selling still obtains in the King-country, but during the past year it has been kept well in check, and the police concerned have worked strenuously to abate the nuisance. Fines amounting to £830 were imposed for this offence during the year.