

With the exception of a few slight breaches of discipline, the conduct of members of the Force, particularly the older members, has been exemplary.

INSPECTOR MARSACK, NAPIER DISTRICT.

On the 1st September, 1919, I arrived at Napier on transfer from Wellington, and took charge of this district, in succession to Superintendent McGrath.

On the 31st March the authorized strength of the Force in this district was 68 of all ranks, made up as follows: 1 Inspector, 1 Sub-Inspector, 2 Senior Sergeants, 6 sergeants, 53 constables, 2 detective-sergeants, 1 detective, 2 temporary constables. The actual strength on same date was 64, there being a shortage of 1 sergeant, 2 constables, and 1 detective-sergeant.

The establishment of a new station at Petane is urgently required. The railway-works in progress in that vicinity have entailed the forming of several camps of workers along the different sections of construction, which require constant supervision. The existing station at Taradale is too far away from this portion of the subdistrict for its efficient supervision, and frequently complaints needing immediate attention are received at the Napier Station, entailing considerable expenditure in motor-hire. I would recommend that the present unwieldy Taradale subdistrict be divided and a new station opened at Petane. I would also recommend the reopening of the station at Nuhaka as early as possible, the township being too distant from Wairoa for efficient supervision.

There were no deaths or dismissals during the year, but 4 constables resigned from the service.

The offences return shows that the total number of all offences reported for the past year was 1,959, an increase of 47 over that of the preceding year. Of this number, 1,887 cases were dealt with by the Courts, leaving 72 undetected cases. There has been a somewhat noticeable increase in sexual offences, the figures showing an increase in cases of this class of 28 over last year's return. However, it is satisfactory to record that in each case the offender was brought to justice. There were also increases in the following offences: Mischief, 37; breach of the peace or behaviour with intent, 34; drunk and disorderly, 12; using profane, indecent, or obscene language, 16; assaulting, obstructing, or resisting constables, 22; failing to maintain wife or children, 21; failing for fourteen days to pay maintenance-moneys, 16; illegally supplying liquor to Natives, 11. The principal decreases were—Theft (undescribed), 42; false pretences, 13; burglary, 20; drunkenness, 22; gaming with instruments, 20; selling or supplying liquor to prohibited persons, 13; breaches of prohibition orders, 17.

There has been no crime of a very serious nature during the year. Three persons were committed for trial for manslaughter, the offences in each case resulting from the reckless driving of motor vehicles. In each case the persons committed were acquitted by the jury.

The general conduct of the police has been good, with the exception of a few minor breaches of the Police Regulations, which have been dealt with by small fines or cautions. An excellent *esprit de corps* exists between the members of the uniform and detective branches of the service, each mutually assisting the other in the execution of their duties. The members of the Force stationed on the East Coast have been especially active in enforcing compliance with the licensing laws in the Maori districts, and have obtained several convictions, entailing substantial penalties.

I would endorse and repeat my predecessor's recommendation in his annual report of 1917 that the licensing laws be amended to the effect that it should be an offence for a Native in a proclaimed area to be found in possession of liquor off licensed premises; also that power be granted the police to search Natives suspected of having liquor in their possession, and to seize the same, without warrant.

The introduction of the Police Offences Amendment Act of 1919 as regards the illegal use of horses and motor vehicles is having a salutary effect, and complaints of cars having been so taken have considerably decreased.

INSPECTOR HENDREY, WANGANUI DISTRICT.

The authorized strength of the district is—1 Inspector, 1 Sub-Inspector, 2 Senior Sergeants, 4 sergeants, 47 constables, 1 district constable, 1 detective-sergeant, and 1 detective: a total of 58 of all ranks.

A new station is required at Breakwater, New Plymouth, and also at Castlecliff, Wanganui. At both these places the population is increasing, and a resident constable is very necessary at each place. Increase of strength is also required at New Plymouth, Stratford, Hawera, Wanganui, and Taihape. At each of these towns population continues to increase, and it is necessary that the strength should be increased, so that stronger night patrols can be arranged at these places.

I beg to recommend the following increases:—

Two constables at New Plymouth, which would enable two men to be on night duty all the year round. The present strength only allows one constable for night-duty purposes, and this is not sufficient.

One constable at Stratford, where the present strength permits one constable for night duty up to 1 a.m.; during the rest of the night there is no police protection, and an increase of one would permit of an all-night patrol, which the size and importance of this town requires.

An increase of two constables at Hawera, which would provide a continuous police patrol day and night. At present there is only a police patrol up to midnight or 1 a.m.; the rest of the night there is no patrol, and Hawera is growing so rapidly that a continuous police patrol is absolutely essential.

An increase of three constables is required at Wanganui, so that at least three constables may be available for night duty. This town is a most important centre—the fifth town in the Dominion—and the population is rapidly increasing; the business area