

of the town is spreading out, and the two men who at present patrol the town are not able to give that supervision that a town of the size of Wanganui demands. The time is soon coming when a sergeant for night-duty purposes will also be required here.

An increase of two men is required at Taihape, which is increasing in population and as a trading centre. It is on the border of the King-country no-license area, and a considerable influx of hard-drinking and sometimes undesirable individuals weekly visit Taihape. Last year 219 offenders were handled by the sergeant and his two constables. The station has a large country area to be policed, which takes up almost the whole of the time of one constable, so that the town work is mostly done by the sergeant and one constable. This town should have a continuous patrol through the night. At present the police patrol up to midnight, which is not sufficient. Comparing the offences dealt with by the Taihape police (219), New Plymouth had a total of 150 offences, Hawera a total of 173 offences, Stratford a total of 63 offences, Wanganui a total of 596 offences; so that the claim that Taihape requires increased police protection is very real.

While urging that the increases recommended at the different towns are very necessary, the lack of housing-accommodation makes the question a difficult one to deal with at present. While there are quarters at New Plymouth and Wanganui for single men, at these towns, and at Stratford, Hawera, and Taihape, it is quite impossible to secure houses for married men. I beg to strongly urge that the Department build houses to provide decent accommodation for their staff. At present no man knows how long he will be permitted to continue in the house he occupies; some men have to pay high rents for houses that are barely fit for habitation, and some of the men have had to scatter their families amongst friends and themselves occupy single men's quarters. All this tends to unsettle the men, and certainly does not help to secure that efficiency that is necessary in a Department like the Police.

Casualties during the year were 4—viz., 1 sergeant and 1 constable retired on superannuation, and 2 constables resigned.

The offences return for the year ended 31st December, 1919, shows that a total of 1,624 offences were reported during the year, of which 1,574 were detected and dealt with. This shows an increase of all offences reported of 221 on the number of offences reported during the previous year. The principal increases are as follows: Assaults (common), 20; theft (undescribed), 49; drunkenness, 46; vagrancy, 37; gaming offences, 48; failing to maintain wives and children, 36; selling or exposing or opening licensed premises at unauthorized times, 25; offences against provision of no-license in Native proclaimed area, 35. The principal decreases are in—Assaults causing actual bodily harm, 19; burglary, 25; assaults and resisting police, 45.

Two girls were prosecuted, one for murder and one for manslaughter of their newly born infants, but in both cases bills were ignored by the grand jury.

The district has been quiet and fairly free from serious crime.

With a few exceptions the conduct of the members of the Force in this district has been excellent. Three constables were punished for offences against the regulations.

Sly-grog selling still continues at Ohakune, Raetihi, and Mokau. Fines for this offence imposed during the year amounted to £210, as compared with £170 imposed during the year 1918. The constables at these stations are vigilant, and, generally speaking, manage to detect and bring offenders before the Court for punishment.

INSPECTOR MACKINNON, PALMERSTON NORTH DISTRICT.

The strength of the Force in the Palmerston North District numbered 40 on the 31st March, 1920, including 1 Inspector, 1 Senior Sergeant, 2 sergeants, 1 detective-sergeant, 32 constables, and 3 temporary constables.

A constable is required at Feilding to fill the vacancy which has existed there for some months past, and an additional constable for beat duty also is required there.

At Shannon, where important public works have largely increased the amount of police work, another constable will be required in the near future.

Three additional constables for beat duty and one plain-clothes constable for inquiry work are required at Palmerston North. The railway inquiry work at Palmerston North alone is sufficient to keep two men fully employed. The present detective staff is overworked and inadequate since the railway authorities have resumed the practice of seeking police assistance to trace goods over-carried or lost in transit.

No stations have been opened or closed during the year. A house for Inspector's residence has been purchased at Palmerston North, and police quarters have been purchased at Rongotea and Terrace End. New quarters will be required at Ashhurst, Levin, and Waldegrave Street in the near future; the houses rented by the Department at these centres have been sold, and the new owners will require possession.

One constable died during the year, and 1 constable retired on voluntary resignation.

A considerable increase is shown this year in the number of offences dealt with in this district. The most noticeable increases are found under the headings of "Theft" and "Common assault." The cause of the increases in these offences may be assigned to the demobilization of large numbers of men from the Expeditionary Forces during the year.

With the exception of a murder at Terrace End there has been no serious crime in this district.

The conduct of members of the Force has been excellent throughout the year. None have been penalized for breach of discipline, while all have been most assiduous in the performance of their duties.