

SUPERINTENDENT NORWOOD, WELLINGTON DISTRICT.

On the 31st March, 1920, the authorized strength was—1 Superintendent, 1 Inspector, 1 Sub-Inspector, 8 Senior Sergeants, 12 sergeants, 134 constables, 1 Chief Detective, 6 detective-sergeants, 3 detectives, 2 matrons, and 1 surgeon: total, 170. The actual strength was 171 of all ranks.

The police-station at Clyde Quay was closed, and a new station established at Lyall Bay.

On the 6th October, 1919, Constable Dudding, of Wellington City, was shot dead while in the execution of his duty by a man named Alexander Aspin, who then committed suicide. Another death also occurred in the case of Senior Sergeant Crean.

One constable retired on pension, 22 voluntarily resigned, and 3 were dismissed. A large number of the resignations were those of temporary constables, in most cases returned soldiers, who appeared to be restless and unable to settle down to steady work.

The total number of offences reported during the year ending the 31st December, 1919, was 4,995, as against 4,074 in the preceding period, an increase of 921 cases. The principal increase is under the heading of "Offences against rights of property." Under this definition there is an increase of 300 cases, as follows: Theft (undescribed), 170; house and shop breaking, 27; receiving stolen property, 10; forgery, 20; uttering, 8; mischief, 55. The cases of drunkenness were 2,240, as against 2,050, an increase of 190 cases. The charges of vagrancy were 105, as against 44, an increase of 61. Offences under Gaming Act, 64, as against 16; increase, 48. Offences under the Licensing Act, 570, as against 400; increase, 170 cases.

Of 4,995 cases reported, in 4,721 offenders were brought before the Court.

Two cases of a serious nature were reported, the murder of Constable Dudding previously referred to, and the shooting of a man named Christopher Carr on a homestead in the Masterton district by a man named Reside, a son of the owner of the homestead. The offender in this case was found by the jury to be insane at the time he committed the offence, and ordered to be kept in custody during the pleasure of the Minister of Justice.

The conduct of all ranks has, with a few exceptions, been satisfactory. During the greater part of the past year there has been a considerable shortage in the strength of the district, with an increase of work in all branches, consequently the staff have had considerable difficulty in coping with it.

The recruits now coming forward for police work are principally young and inexperienced men, and the want of training in the depot is having a bad effect on the efficiency of the service. I beg to suggest that the training-depot be opened as early as possible, so that the men can get proper tuition, drill, and physical training before being detailed for police duty.

INSPECTOR CRUICKSHANK, GREYMOUTH DISTRICT.

On the 31st March last the strength of this district was—1 Inspector, 2 Senior Sergeants, 4 sergeants, 31 constables, 2 detective-sergeants; total, 40—being 7 constables short of authorized strength. One sergeant has since retired on superannuation, 1 Senior Sergeant has been transferred, and 1 detective-sergeant is now acting as a Senior Sergeant at Greymouth. The vacancies for constables are—1 at Colden, 1 at Seddonville, 1 at Waituta (the latter station was temporarily closed during the war, and a constable may not be required for some little time yet, until the mines there get fully manned), and 2 at Greymouth Station. Otira Station has been reduced by 1 constable, and Globe Mine Station closed.

A new station is required to be opened at Millerton, where a house has been purchased for that purpose.

No new stations have been opened during the year. Globe Mine Station was closed on the 11th July, 1919.

The offences return for 1919 shows that 696 offences were reported, as compared with 829 in 1918, a net decrease of 133 offences. This decrease is chiefly accounted for under the heading of "Breaches of the Licensing Act." Of the total number of offences reported over 98 per cent. have been accounted for either by arrest or summons.

The only serious crimes were: The dwellinghouse occupied by Senior Sergeant Simpson was damaged by explosives, and later a similar offence was committed at the dwellinghouse occupied by Constable Black; and again early this year a second attempt to damage by explosives was made at Senior Sergeant Simpson's house. These crimes were apparently committed with intent to intimidate the police in doing their duty in a certain direction.

The conduct of police has been good. All except one or two have shown zeal in the performance of their duties. With a depleted staff and increasing work done by police for other Departments it was found difficult at times to overtake all the work in a satisfactory manner.

SUPERINTENDENT DWYER, CHRISTCHURCH DISTRICT.

The actual strength of the Force in the district on the 31st March, 1920, was 118, made up as follows: 1 Superintendent, 1 Sub-Inspector, 4 Senior Sergeants, 9 sergeants, 79 constables, 14 temporary constables, 1 Chief Detective, 4 detective-sergeants, 3 detectives, 1 matron, and 1 surgeon.

The new district of Timaru was formed in December last, in charge of Inspector Hastie, and 9 stations from this district, together with 3 sergeants, 1 detective-sergeant, and 17 constables, were handed over to him.

The casualties in the district during the year were as follows: 6 constables resigned from the Force, 2 constables were dismissed, and 1 discharged. One sergeant and 1 constable retired from the Force on superannuation, and 2 constables were retired from the service as medically unfit.