

Of the offences reported, 95 per cent. were accounted for either by arrest or summons.

The sly-grog evil, while still existing, has been kept well in check during the year. The number of offences of this nature has decreased considerably, and the total amount of fines inflicted during the year was £766.

With very few exceptions the conduct of the members of the Force throughout the district has been excellent.

The Arms Act, 1920, coming into operation at the beginning of the year, created a vast amount of additional work, especially with the depleted condition of the Force at present existing in this district.

INSPECTOR CASSELLS, GISBORNE DISTRICT.

On the 1st January of this year I took over charge of the new Gisborne District, which comprises the original Gisborne Subdistrict with the addition of Opotiki and Whakatane Stations, formerly incorporated in the Hamilton District.

On the 31st March, 1921, the authorized strength of the Force in this district was 28 of all ranks. The total is made up as follows: 1 Inspector, 1 Senior Sergeant, 2 sergeants, 22 constables, 1 detective, and 1 temporary constable. The actual strength on the same date was 26, there being a shortage of 1 sergeant and 1 constable. An increase of at least 3 constables is urgently required to the authorized strength at the Gisborne station. At present only four constables are available for beat duty, and the size of the town warrants the increase.

I would recommend that a station be established at Kaiti, which is a suburb of Gisborne with a rapidly increasing population, and which, owing to its situation, cannot be regularly patrolled from the main station.

The offences return is dealt with in the Napier District annual report.

The general conduct of the Force throughout the district has been good, and, although short-handed, the work has been satisfactorily performed.

INSPECTOR MARSACK, NAPIER DISTRICT.

On the 31st March, 1921, the authorized strength of the Force in this district was 48 of all ranks. The total is made up as follows: 1 Inspector, 2 Senior Sergeants, 4 sergeants, 35 constables, 1 detective sergeant, 1 detective, and 4 temporary constables. The actual strength on the same date was 45, there being a shortage of 1 sergeant, 1 detective, and 1 constable.

On the 1st January, 1921, a new police district was formed, with headquarters at Gisborne. Ten stations originally in the Napier district have been detached therefrom and incorporated in the Gisborne District.

The necessity for the subdivision of the Taradale Subdistrict is very marked, as it is impossible for the one constable stationed there to efficiently supervise the subdistrict as it now exists. There are seven licensed hotels in this district, three of which are at a considerable distance from the station—viz., Tarawera, sixty miles, Te Pohue, thirty-two, and Puketitiri, thirty-one miles. Five new soldier settlements have been recently established, distant from fourteen to thirty-three miles from Taradale, and several railway camps, containing over 100 men, are scattered along the Eskdale Valley. I would strongly recommend that a station be opened in the vicinity of Petane, to ensure the proper supervision of this portion of the Taradale Subdistrict. I would also recommend the reopening of the Nuhaka Station, as, owing to the railway and harbour-construction works at Waikopuku, the population has increased, and these townships are too far from Wairoa for efficient supervision.

There were no deaths or dismissals during the year, but 2 sergeants and 1 constable resigned from the service.

The offences return shows that the total number of all offences reported for the past year was 1,999, an increase of 40 over that of the preceding year. Of this number, 1,916 cases were dealt with by the Courts, leaving 83 undetected offences. Offences against the rights of property show an increase of 118 cases reported over the preceding year's figures. Of these cases, however, 83·5 per cent. were dealt with by the Courts. On the other hand, offences against morality show a considerable decrease, and drunkenness has also decreased by 13 cases.

There has been no crime of a very serious nature during the year. Three charges of man-slaughter were dealt with, two of which were due to the reckless driving of motor-vehicles, and the third a charge against a young woman in connection with the death of her illegitimate child. In each case the person committed was acquitted by the jury.

The general conduct of the police has been good, and the relations between the uniform and detective branches have been cordial, to the benefit of the working of the whole service. The activity of the members of the Force stationed in Maori districts in enforcing compliance with the licensing laws has been maintained, and several prosecutions have taken place.

I would repeat the recommendation made in my last annual report regarding the advantage of an alteration in the licensing laws, to the effect that it should be an offence for a Native to be found in possession of liquor, off licensed premises, in a proclaimed area, and that the police be empowered to search Natives suspected of so being in possession of liquor, and seize any liquor found, without warrant.

The Arms Act has been put into force since the 1st January, 1921. So far 8,850 arms have been registered in this district, 76 automatic pistols and 9,964 rounds of ammunition surrendered to police, and 210 automatic pistols have also been handed in, whose owners are applying, under section 4 subsection (3) of the Act, for licenses to retain same.