

The amount of work connected with the Arms Act has proved much heavier than was at first anticipated. I find it will be necessary to ask for the appointment of one man to act as Authorized Officer under the Act. He will be required to devote the whole of his time to the registration of arms, and to the many other duties involved in the effective and proper administration of this necessary and useful measure.

The station at Waldegrave Street, Palmerston North, was transferred to Cuba Street, where a new house was purchased for a police-station. The properties formerly rented at Ashhurst and Levin have also been purchased by the Department. It is of interest to note that no houses are now being rented by the Department in this district.

The Department has a large section of land adjacent to the police-station at Palmerston North on which there is room for at least three cottages. I beg to recommend that consideration be given to the matter of having houses for police built on this land. Action in this direction would not only result in a substantial saving to the Government in years to come, but would also materially increase efficiency in the Force, inasmuch as officers would be living within the precincts of the police-station, and their services would be available at any hour of the day or night in case of emergency. The building of such cottages would also be an important factor in the solution of the housing problem, a matter which is affecting the administration of the Department very seriously, and which is unlikely to be relieved for a long time.

The total number of offences reported during 1920 was 1,173, and of these 1,117 were detected and dealt with. The principal increases in offences were observed to be under the following heads: Obscene language, 10; vagrancy, 9; failing to maintain wives and children, 33; failing to pay maintenance moneys, 26; breaches of Licensing Act, 16. Decreases appear as follows: Theft (undescribed), 37; theft of animals, 9; housebreaking, 4; forgery, 3; drunkenness, 47; unlawfully using motor-cars, 7; absconding from industrial school, 45; ill-treating children, 7.

With one or two exceptions the conduct of the men has been very good; both branches of the service have worked harmoniously, with excellent results.

SUPERINTENDENT NORWOOD, WELLINGTON DISTRICT.

The authorized strength on the 31st March, 1921, was—1 Superintendent, 1 Inspector, 1 Sub-Inspector, 8 Senior Sergeants, 12 sergeants, 142 constables, 1 Chief Detective, 3 detective-sergeants, 7 detectives, 2 acting detectives, 2 matrons, and 1 surgeon; total, 181.

The police-station at Miramar (rented premises) has been vacated, and a building purchased at Seatoun in lieu thereof.

The casualties during the year were—Death, one constable; retired on pension, 1 constable; resigned voluntarily, 1 detective-sergeant, 1 detective, 5 permanent and 16 temporary constables; discharged, 1 temporary constable; dismissed, 1 permanent and 2 temporary constables.

The total number of offences reported during the year ending 31st December, 1920, was 5,334, as against 4,995 cases reported during the preceding period, an increase of 339. The principal increase is under the heading of drunkenness (2,478 cases, as against 2,240 the previous year), and offences against rights of property. Under the latter definition there is an increase as follows: Theft, 145; theft from dwellings, 8; theft by clerks, 4; false pretences, 4; and robbery, 2. Under the heading of vagrancy an increase of 28 cases is shown.

The recent legislation making it an offence to unlawfully use horses, motor-cars, &c., resulted in 38 cases being brought before the Court.

Under the Gaming Act there were 52 cases, as against 72 cases the preceding year, a decrease of 20.

Under the Licensing Act there were 468 cases, as against 578, a decrease of 110 cases. The principal decreases in this connection are under the heading of breaches of prohibition orders (85), and found on licensed premises after hours (16).

During the year there were two cases of murder reported. In one case a man at Carterton during a drunken dispute with another man shot the latter dead, the accused being found guilty of manslaughter. The second case was that of a woman whose body, with peculiar wounds on the face, was found floating in the Wellington Harbour. There was no direct evidence to show how these wounds were caused, but the Coroner held, on the evidence adduced at the inquest, that the woman was murdered.

The conduct of all ranks, with a few exceptions, has been satisfactory. In three cases defaulters were compelled to leave the service through committing serious breaches of the regulations, and in the other cases monetary penalties have been inflicted.

INSPECTOR MATHIESON, GREYMOUTH DISTRICT.

The actual strength of the Force on the 31st March last was—1 Inspector, 2 Senior Sergeants, 4 sergeants, 30 constables, and 1 detective; total, 38 of all ranks, being 7 constables short of authorized strength. An assistant clerk and two extra constables have been required at Greymouth for some time.

During the past year a house was purchased at Millerton and a constable was stationed there. The station at Stafford has been closed.

Inspector Cruickshank and Sergeant W. Folley retired on superannuation, and two constables were allowed to resign.

The total offences reported during the year were 1,025, compared with 696 in the previous year, being an increase of 329. Of the offences reported, 996 were accounted for by arrest or summons,