

The offences return shows the total number of all offences reported for the year ended 31st December, 1921, to be 1,393. In the last annual report the offences return included the offences reported in the Gisborne portion of the district, which has now been detached and formed into a separate district. Deducting these Gisborne offences, this year's figures show an increase of 216 offences for the year. 1,342 cases were dealt with by the Courts, a proportion of 96·4 per cent. of all offences reported, leaving 51 undetected. 67 cases were dealt with in the Supreme Court, resulting in 66 convictions. 1,196 were summarily convicted, and 79 discharged. The net increases under the different headings are as follows: Offences against the person, 5; offences against the rights of property, 45; Police Offences Act, 97; Gaming Act, 4; Destitute Persons Act, 23; Licensing Act, 22; miscellaneous, 14.

Two charges of manslaughter were dealt with by the Courts during the police year, a decrease of one from the previous period. One of these was of a revolting nature. On the night of the 22nd April, 1921, a man committed rape on an elderly woman at Hastings. The offence was accomplished with considerable violence, and resulted in her death from heart-failure. The offender was arrested the following day at Waipukurau, forty miles from the scene of the crime, eventually convicted, and sentenced to twenty years' imprisonment. In the second case a lad of six years of age was knocked down and killed on the 7th November, 1921, on Karamu Road, Hastings, by a motor-car recklessly driven by a man who was under the influence of liquor. He was eventually convicted, admitted to probation for three years, and prohibited for the same term.

The conduct of the police in this district during the year has been very satisfactory. Very few complaints have been made by the public, and those on inquiry proved to have no foundation. Only three minor offences of a disciplinary nature were dealt with by myself.

There has been little, if any, change in the population of the district during the year on the whole. The railway-works at Waikopoku and at Eskdale have attracted a certain labouring population of a migratory nature.

INSPECTOR MURRAY, NEW PLYMOUTH DISTRICT.

I took charge of the district on the 11th August, 1921.

Another constable is required at New Plymouth and also at Stratford, so that a more efficient night patrol may be provided. A police-station is required at Moturoa, so that an effectual supervision of the Breakwater (Port of New Plymouth) may be maintained. The Breakwater is about two miles and a half from the chief post-office, and a daily patrol is now being provided from this station, but the increased population, harbour-reconstruction works, and overseas-shipping trade warrants the appointment of a permanent constable in the vicinity.

The offences return for this district shows that in 1921 a total of 711 offences were reported, as compared with 800 the previous year—a decrease of 89. Of the offences reported over 95 per cent. were accounted for either by arrest or summons, leaving 33 undetected. 53 cases were committed for trial, and 26 of these resulted in convictions at the Supreme Court. 576 were summarily convicted and 49 discharged. There were increases under the headings of—Assault, 5; theft (undescribed), 33; theft from dwellings, 5; thefts by servants, 6; failing to pay maintenance, 6; supplying liquor to persons under twenty-one years of age, 23; forgery, 8. Decreases under the following headings are shown: House or shop breaking, 6; attempted house or shop breaking, 27; mischief, 13; breach of peace, 13; drunkenness, 26; drunk while in charge of horse, 10; unlawful betting, 23; selling or supplying liquor at unauthorized times, 13; breach of prohibition order, 39; None of these figures call for special comment, as they are the increases and decreases experienced year by year.

The conduct of the police has been good and the work satisfactorily performed.

INSPECTOR FOUHY, WANGANUI DISTRICT.

Two more constables are required at Wanganui, and one each at Taihape and Taumarunui. The constable at Raetihi is also asking for assistance, as his work has increased beyond his ability.

The number of offences reported during the year ended 31st December, 1921, was 1,181, as against 1,277 for the year 1920. The principal increases are as follows: Murder, 2; assault, 28; rape, 1; theft (undescribed), 10; theft by clerks, 4; theft of animals, 9; house or shop breaking, 15; gaming with instruments, 6; failing to maintain wife and children, 11; failing to pay maintenance, 17; found on licensed premises after closing-hours, 9. The principal decreases are as follows: Attempted murder, 4; theft from dwelling, 6; false pretences, 3; burglary, 7; drunkenness, 43; drunk while in charge of a horse or loaded firearms, 5; using profane, indecent, or obscene language, 13; found in common gaming-house, 33; selling or supplying liquor to intoxicated persons, 13; selling or exposing liquor for sale at unauthorized times, 13; breaches of prohibition orders, 9; offences against provisions of no license in Native proclaimed areas, 13.

The more serious crimes consisted of a young man driving a motor-car along a street in Wanganui at night, and knocking down and killing a young man and a young woman. The driver was charged with manslaughter, committed for trial, and acquitted by a jury.

An unusual case arose in which a man was convicted of manslaughter. While both were under the influence of liquor one lay on the floor and requested the other to chop his head off with an axe. The latter did so and received a sentence of fourteen years.

Two men, armed with revolvers, broke into a shop at night; and when two constables followed and attempted an arrest they were fired at by the shop-breakers, who were, with assistance, arrested. When the offenders were on remand they broke out of gaol, and were at liberty about a week before they were recaptured. They were convicted, and each received a total sentence of fifteen years.

The conduct of the police has, on the whole, been very good, only one man having been dealt with for breach of the regulations.