

without warrant. The defect in the section as it at present stands is frequently felt by the police, and experience has shown that it is not in the public interest. There is not any difficulty in obtaining a search-warrant under the Justices of the Peace Act, 1908, or the Licensing Act, 1908, to authorize a search for evidence of petty theft or sly-grog selling, where the penalties provided are little more than nominal; but, strange to say, no such authority is obtainable under the Crimes Act, when in the interests of justice the police require to legitimately take possession of articles used in connection with the commission of some crimes in respect of which the punishment is laid down as imprisonment with hard labour for life.

I also suggest that the Police Offences Act, 1908, should be amended so that (subject to the continuance of the provision in section 52 (2) of that Act) any prosecution under the Act and its amendments shall take place by way of summary proceedings, and not by way of indictment, notwithstanding the provisions of any other Act to the contrary. At present any person charged with using indecent language, or soliciting alms under false pretence, or with having insufficient or no lawful means of support, and having been previously convicted of a like offence, and so forth, may demand trial by jury, at a needless delay in the conduct of the Court proceedings and unnecessary cost to the country. Formerly all such offences were determinable summarily, and I have never heard of a suspicion of an injustice having resulted therefrom. The penalty for Sunday trading under section 17 of that Act is, I submit, quite inadequate, and should be substantially increased.

INSPECTOR MATHIESON, GREYMOUTH DISTRICT.

The station at Blackwater has been closed during the year, and the station at Waiuta has been reopened—the latter being closed some considerable time owing to shortage of men. A new station has been opened at Millerton.

During the year 1,196 offences were reported, of which 1,173 were dealt with by either arrest or summons, leaving less than 2 per cent. unaccounted for. There was, however, an increase of 171 offences compared with previous year; these are practically due to breaches under the Licensing Act and drunkenness.

No crimes worthy of mention or of a serious nature took place during the year.

The conduct of the police, on the whole, throughout this district has been good, a few fines being, however, imposed.

SUPERINTENDENT SHEEHAN, CHRISTCHURCH DISTRICT.

During the year a Sub-Inspector was appointed to this station. I beg to recommend that the strength of Christchurch Station be increased by two sergeants and fifteen constables, in order to carry out the work satisfactorily, now that the Police Department has taken over the control of traffic in this city. Additional constables required at St. Albans and Lyttelton Stations could then be supplied from this station. For some considerable time past a large number of eligible young men have been offering themselves for enrolment in the Force, and considering this there should be no difficulty in getting sufficient recruits to fulfil the requirements of the service. A vacancy still exists at Leeston Station on account of the Department being unable to procure suitable premises for a constable to reside in.

The number of offences reported in the district during the year ended 31st December, 1921, was 3,553, as compared with 3,596 in 1920. The principal increases in the various offences during the year were—Carnally knowing girls under sixteen years, 11; house or shop breaking, 29; breaches of the peace, 13; vagrancy, 12; failing to pay maintenance-moneys, 24; failing to maintain wife and children, 10; found on licensed premises after hours, 80; breaches of prohibition orders, 10; drunk or behaving in a violent or offensive manner on a railway, 31. Ten of the offences of housebreaking were committed by one offender, who was arrested and pleaded guilty to the whole of the charges, and is now undergoing a long term of imprisonment for the offences. The principal decreases were—Escaping from prison or lawful custody, 7; assault, 9; assault with intent to commit a crime, 6; theft (undescribed), 52; theft from the person, 7; theft from dwellings, 23; theft by clerks or servants, 35; mischief, 36; drunkenness, 66; cruelty to animals, 11; using profane, indecent, or obscene language, 43; unlawfully using horses, motor-cars, &c., 9; selling or supplying liquor to prohibited persons, 7.

There has been no serious crime committed in the district during the year that calls for any special remarks.

The conduct of the sergeants and constables within the district during the year, with minor exceptions, has been exemplary.

In regard to the Gaming Amendment Act, there is no apparent street betting here at present, and the other betting is not in evidence, as it is well concealed, and detection is a hard matter.

INSPECTOR WILLIS, TIMARU DISTRICT.

I beg to report having taken charge of this district on the 20th December last, in succession to Inspector Hastie, who retired on superannuation on reaching the age-limit.

In accordance with the usual practice a temporary station has been opened at Pareora for the period of the killing season at the freezing-works, after which it will be closed up again.

The total number of offences reported during the year ended 31st December, 1921, was 877, as against 795 for the previous year, thus showing an increase of 82. The principal increases were—Assaults, indecent, 11; thefts, 42; false pretences, 13; housebreaking, 8; breach of peace, 14; mischief, 8; cruelty to animals, 8; drunkenness, 38; failing to maintain, 7. The principal decreases were—Attempted house or shop breaking, 15; obscene language, 16; absent from ship without leave, 10; breaches of prohibition order, 12; behaving in an offensive manner on railway, 7. None of the figures quoted call for special comment, as they are merely the fluctuations experienced from time to time.