

The only very serious crime calling for special remark was the murder of Constable James Dorgan, whilst in the execution of his duty, on the night of the 26th August last by an armed burglar, whom the constable had found ransacking a drapery establishment, and who killed the constable with a revolver-bullet, and made good his escape without leaving any trace. Immediate and most exhaustive inquiries were made by experienced officers, and subsequently a substantial reward was offered by the Government, but all without result.

The conduct of the members of the Force during the year has been satisfactory, only a few having to be dealt with for minor breaches of the regulations.

The population of the town is steadily increasing, and with it the housing question has become extremely acute, and the married members of the Force find it increasingly difficult to rent houses in the vicinity of their work. Provision urgently requires to be made for a residence for the officer in charge of the district.

#### SUPERINTENDENT McGRATH, DUNEDIN DISTRICT.

Three additional constables are required to the strength of the district—two for the Central Station and one for South Dunedin.

No new stations were opened and none closed during the year, neither were any premises purchased for the Police Department.

The total number of offences reported was 1,349, as against 1,285 for the previous year—an increase of 64. 1,247 prosecutions took place, leaving 102 offences unaccounted for. Increases appear in the offences return under the headings of—Incest, 2; indecent acts, 2; attempted murder, 2; assaults causing actual bodily harm, 4; thefts, 46; thefts from dwelling, 14; theft of animals, 5; false pretences, 6; house or shop breaking, 13; drunk and disorderly, 15; using indecent or profane language, 11; vagrancy, 11; unlawfully using horses or motor-cars, 5; offences by husbands while separation orders are in force, 10; breaches of prohibition orders, 13; found on licensed premises after closing-hours, 38. Decreases appear under the headings of—Murder, 2; attempted theft, 2; robbery and aggravated robbery, 4; attempted house or shop breaking, 3; forgery, 4; mischief, 12; threatening acts with intent to intimidate, 3; breach of the peace, 7; drunkenness, 7; drunk while in charge of horse, &c., 9; assaulting, obstructing, or resisting constables, 5; failing to maintain wife or children, 23; failing to pay maintenance-money, 48.

There have been no serious crimes in the district during the year that require special mention, and in practically all serious cases the offenders have been brought to justice.

The conduct of the police during the year, with but few exceptions, has been very satisfactory. There was an entire absence of friction between the different branches of the service, and all ranks cordially co-operated in the discharge of their duties. I consider the monetary allowance for members of the Detective Branch is quite inadequate, and I suggest that it be increased to at least 3s. per diem for the permanent staff. We have some detectives who would do credit to any Detective Force in the Empire, and in order to retain their services and attract others like them an increased allowance is necessary. I know from my own experience as a detective for some twenty-five years that detectives who take a proper interest in their work are often called upon to spend money which they cannot recover from the Police Department.

The provisions of the Justices of the Peace Act, 1908, for taking the depositions of a person who is dangerously ill are practically useless, because of the necessity for having the accused present or served with a notice of the intention to take the deposition. In New South Wales such a deposition may be taken in the absence of the accused without notice, and is admissible in evidence after the death of the witness. This provision has been the means of securing important evidence which otherwise would have been lost. As our law stands at present, if an offender wounds a person with intent to murder, and manages to keep out of the way until the person dies from the wound, the evidence of the murdered person is lost. Such cases have occurred in the Dominion, and the same difficulty is sometimes experienced in cases of criminal abortion. Of course, a statement made by a person who believes he is dying is admissible, but it is generally impossible to obtain such a statement, as persons will not believe they are dying until they are past making a satisfactory statement. I recommend that sections 168 to 170 of the Justices of the Peace Act, 1908, be repealed, and replaced by similar provisions to those of section 406 of the New South Wales Crimes Act, 1900.

#### INSPECTOR DEW, INVERCARGILL DISTRICT.

An increase to the strength of the Force of one sergeant, one detective, and two constables is necessary. The sergeant is required to be stationed at Riverton to take charge of that town, which is now a populous thriving centre—the town itself containing six hotels. His subdistrict would embrace Otautau, Nightcaps, Orepuki, and Tuatapere. The detective is required to assist the detective-sergeant in his work, which has become far too heavy for him to handle satisfactorily. The two constables required are for the better policing of the town, and to take the place of one on twelve months sick-leave and one permanently employed under the Arms Act.

During the year a new station has been formed at Tuatapere, which has greatly improved the conduct of that locality.

The total number of offences reported during the year ended 31st December, 1921, was 700, as against 898 for the year 1920. The principal increases were—Murder, 1; false statements and declarations, 2; escaping from prison, 5; false pretences, 13; robbery, 2; arson and attempted arson, 6; illegally opening postal packets, 4; failing to pay maintenance, 4; selling and exposing liquor for sale, 4; neglecting children, 4. The principal decreases were—Assaults, 20; rape and attempted rape, 3; theft (undescribed), 52; theft from dwelling, 16; house and shop breaking, 3; theft of animals, 4; burglary, 4; mischief, 22; drunkenness, 37; drunk and disorderly, 6; obscene language, 6; vagrancy, 7; gaming, 21; failing to maintain wife and children, 11; found on licensed premises after closing-hours, 17.

The conduct of all ranks in this district has been very good, with the exception that two constables were dealt with for breaches of regulations.