

The offences return for the year ended 31st December shows a total of 1,244 offences reported, as compared with 1,210 during the previous year, making an increase of 34. Of the offences reported, 1,171 were accounted for by arrests or summonses, leaving 73 cases undetected. Of the cases dealt with, 123 were committed for trial, 958 summarily convicted, and 90 discharged. 122 of those committed for trial were convicted.

The police duties in this district have been carried on in a satisfactory manner during the past year. The conduct of the police has been good, only a few having been dealt with for minor breaches of the regulations.

The population of this district is on the increase. This has been a very prosperous year for Hawke's Bay, on account of the enhanced value of wool sold during the year.

INSPECTOR MURRAY, NEW PLYMOUTH DISTRICT.

The authorized strength of the police in this district on the 31st March last was thirty-two. An increase in the rank of sergeant was brought about by the promotion of the District Clerk.

Another constable is required at Stratford so that a more efficient night patrol may be provided.

During the year one constable retired on superannuation and one resigned to take up other employment.

The offences return for this district shows that in 1923 a total of 764 offences were reported, as compared with 677 the previous year. 722 were accounted for by arrest or summons, leaving 42 undetected. 41 males and 1 female were committed for trial, 36 males and 1 female being convicted. 603 males and 18 females were summarily convicted, and 53 males and 6 females discharged.

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

The population of this district is steadily increasing. During the past five years the population of the Borough of New Plymouth has increased from 8,500 to approximately 15,000.

SUPERINTENDENT FOUHY, WANGANUI DISTRICT.

The strength of the Force on the 31st March last was forty-one all told, an increase of one over the previous year. The authorized strength of Wanganui has been increased by one detective and one constable. Another constable each is required at Wanganui and Taihape, and two at Taumarunui.

The number of offences reported during the year ended 31st December, 1923, was 1,138, as against 1,105 for the year 1922, an increase of 33.

At 8.15 p.m. on the 26th October, 1923, a Mrs. Oates left her husband in his shop at Aramoho and went to her home, about half a mile distant. About an hour and a half afterwards her husband returned home, and states: "I left my bicycle, on which was a bag containing more than £100, near the back door. When opening the back door I was struck from behind on the head with some blunt instrument and felled inwards on to the kitchen-floor. Here, though on my back, I defended myself successfully with my arms and feet against the further attacks of my assailant, whom I did not see on account of the blood from my wounds trickling down over my eyes. When the assailant disappeared I found that my bag and contents had also disappeared, and immediately afterwards found my wife in another room with her head battered in. She died three hours afterwards without regaining consciousness." Exhaustive inquiries have, so far, failed to trace the offender.

Sly-grog selling in the King-country is well kept in check. The fines imposed for this offence during the year amount to £631.

The behaviour of the members of the Force has in general been good; only two defaulters.

The district continues prosperous and the population of Wanganui and suburbs continues to increase.

On the 6th July, 1923, at 6 a.m., the night express train, Auckland to Wellington, struck a large boulder which had fallen off the hill on to the railway-line at Ongarue. Part of the train was derailed and sixteen passengers killed.

INSPECTOR SIMPSON, PALMERSTON NORTH DISTRICT.

The strength of the Force in the Palmerston North District on the 31st March, 1924, was forty-three.

During the year an additional detective was placed on the strength at Palmerston North. There is urgent need for at least three constables for beat duty at this station, the present number being inadequate to give the town proper attention. The population is rapidly increasing in the town and district, and the work of the police increased in consequence.

An additional constable is also required at Feilding, where the present staff is insufficient to afford an all-night patrol and give the town the attention due to a place of its size and importance.

A new station is required at Marton Junction, where, owing to the considerable railway traffic and inquiry work, a constable could be kept fully employed. The duties of attending to the town and surrounding districts, the population of which is rapidly increasing, are quite sufficient to keep the two constables at present stationed at Marton fully employed.

A request has been made for an additional constable at Otaki. The constable stationed there has to attend to all police work as far south as Paekakariki—twenty miles distant. I am of opinion, however, that a constable stationed at the latter place would be more useful than a second constable stationed at Otaki.

One sergeant resigned during the year.

An increase is shown this year in the total number of offences dealt with in the district—viz., 1,282 cases, as against 1,119 for the previous year. There has been no serious crime in the district to call for special remark. The increase of offences may be attributed to the increased population and the number of outsiders attracted by the public works going on in the district. Of the offences