

reported, 95 per cent. were accounted for either by arrest or summons. The conduct of the members of the Force has been very good. Three constables were dealt with for breaches of the regulations.

The population of all towns and rural districts appears to be steadily increasing; the increase in population and apparent prosperity in the Town of Palmerston North being very noticeable at present.

SUPERINTENDENT MCILVENNEY, WELLINGTON DISTRICT.

On the 31st March, 1924, the authorized strength of the Force in this district was 186. During the year there was an increase of four constables to provide for contingent details at the Central Station in the City of Wellington and at Wellington South Station.

I recommend an early increase of two sergeants and twelve constables, to meet requirements at the Central and Taranaki Street Police-stations and at Blenheim. At the latter station an additional constable for night duty is necessary, as at present there is only one constable available for that duty, and his services are inadequate. In Wellington City a sergeant is needed to take charge of the watchhouse at night, and four constables to meet demands at the Central Station and give attention to outlying suburbs where stations have not been opened; and a sergeant and seven constables at Taranaki Street Station are actually required, in order to give adequate service in the commercial area of the city, and at Clyde Quay, Oriental Bay, and Roseneath. Within the past five years there has not been an addition in the number of sergeants here.

Since last annual report no stations have been opened or closed in this district.

The casualties were: One acting-detective, eight constables, and one temporary constable, by voluntary resignation; one constable by compulsory resignation; two temporary constables by discharge; and one constable by dismissal.

For the year ended 31st December, 1923, the total number of offences reported was 4,335, as against 4,463 for the previous year—a decrease of 128—and 4,020 prosecutions resulted.

The increases do not call for special remark excepting in the cases of murder, unlawful detention of children, and procuration of abortion. These offences were detected during the investigation of baby-farming cases for which Daniel Richard Cooper was responsible. Offender was convicted and executed for the murder of one of his victims.

The general conduct of the police and the standard of efficiency maintained have been satisfactory and creditable.

The population of Wellington urban area is now estimated at 113,560, and is steadily increasing. Suburban stations are required at Kelburn (population 3,250) and Wadestown (population 1,750).

Recent legislation has been found to work smoothly and well, and in some instances to have materially strengthened the hands of the police. I recommend favourable consideration of an extension of the age of juvenile offenders under Part III of the Justices of the Peace Act, 1908.

INSPECTOR ECCLES, GREYMOUTH DISTRICT.

The strength of the Force on the 31st March last was forty-four, which shows an increase of one constable compared with last year's return and one constable short of authorized strength of the district. I recommend an increase of one constable for Greymouth Station, as a constable is urgently required for duty as day watchhouse-keeper, and he could also assist the Senior Sergeant in the Arms Office.

No new stations were opened during the year, and none were closed.

The police-station at Rimu was destroyed by fire on the 14th April, 1923. At the time of the fire the station had been unoccupied for a few days, owing to the transfer of the constable to another station. The origin of the fire is unknown.

One constable retired on pension, and one constable compulsorily resigned during the year.

The offences return for the year ended 31st December, 1923, shows that the total number of all offences reported was 1,236, as compared with 1,347 for 1922, a net decrease of 111. Of the offences reported, 1,204 were accounted for by arrest or summons, leaving 32 undetected, a very small percentage. Of the cases dealt with, 11 were committed for trial, 1,043 were summarily convicted, and 150 were discharged. Of those committed for trial, 5 were convicted and 6 acquitted.

The only serious crime during the year worthy of mention was a case against a ship's fireman, who was committed for trial on a charge of manslaughter, and was acquitted. There was also a case where a seaman stabbed another seaman, and he was committed for trial on a charge of assault causing actual bodily harm. He was convicted, and admitted to probation for two years.

The conduct of the police has been very good, and no fines were inflicted during the year.

The population of the district shows a slight increase, due to the fact of improved railway communication, the Otira Tunnel being opened for railway traffic on the 4th August, 1923. There appears to be plenty of employment in this district, and the people are apparently fairly prosperous.

I am of the opinion that the law should be amended so as to give a Stipendiary Magistrate power to deal summarily, without the right of trial by a jury, in the following offences—viz., offences mentioned in sections 41, 42, 50, 51, and 52, Police Offences Act, 1908, and also the offences mentioned in section 179, Justices of the Peace Act, 1908. Section 3, Police Offences Amendment Act, 1919, should be amended so as to give the police power of arrest.

SUPERINTENDENT MACKINNON, CHRISTCHURCH DISTRICT.

The actual strength of the Force in this district on the 31st March, 1924, was 126, being an increase of two during the year. An extra constable has been added to the strength of St. Albans and New Brighton Stations respectively.

A considerable amount of work is thrown upon the Police Force by other Government Departments—namely, Education, Railways, Defence, Pensions, State Advances, and Internal Affairs; and I find, to cope with the extra work entailed, that I must ask for a considerable augmentation to the