

POLICE BUILDINGS, ETC.

The following works in connection with police-stations have been carried out during the year by the Public Works Department :—

New police-stations have been erected at Normanby, Sumner, and Lumsden, and new offices at Hastings. Additional office accommodation has been provided at Mount Albert, Lower Hutt, and Addington. Alterations, renovations, and improvements were effected at a number of stations, the principal being Auckland Central, Newton, Parnell, Cambridge, Mount Eden, Hamilton, Matamata, Kingsland, Takapuna, Kihikihi, Newmarket, Epsom, Ellerslie, Raglan, Otahuhu, Rangiora, Linwood, Sydenham, Cheviot, Riccarton, Amberley, Christchurch, Addington, Papanui, Matura, Roslyn, Invercargill, St. Bathans, St. Kilda, Arrowtown, Port Chalmers, Otautau, Gisborne, Tokomaru Bay, Ross, Westport, Greymouth, Charleston, Port Ahuriri, Wakefield, Nelson, Richmond, Marton, Fitzroy, Ongarue, Taneatua, Rotorua, Maungaturoto, Waipu, Dargaville, Russell, Whangaroa, Taranaki Street (Wellington), Pahiatua, Wellington Central, Weraroa, and Training Depot (Wellington).

GENERAL.

Conduct.—The general conduct of the members of the Force during the past year has been most creditable. Comparatively few defaulters have had to be dealt with for breaches of discipline or misconduct, and the efficiency of the Force has been well maintained.

Recruits.—The improvement in pay and service conditions has attracted many young men of good education and excellent physique to the Force, and the resultant improvement is as advantageous as it is noticeable.

Strength of Force.—Owing to the many demands for increased police protection throughout the Dominion, the services of an additional thirty constables are necessary to meet present requirements.

Co-ordinated Districts.—During the past year the co-ordinated system has been extended to Wellington and Christchurch. It is working well, and the result has been most satisfactory.

Buildings.—On account of their age many of the departmental buildings require replacement, and it is hoped that at an early date this will be accomplished. The system of renting houses for police purposes is not satisfactory, and I trust that it will be discontinued as early as possible and provision made for future and permanent requirements.

Extracts from reports of officers in charge of districts are appended.

W. B. McILVENY,
Commissioner of Police.

EXTRACTS FROM ANNUAL REPORTS OF OFFICERS IN CHARGE OF DISTRICTS.

SUPERINTENDENT WOHLMANN, AUCKLAND HEAD DISTRICT.

During the year the strength of the co-ordinated districts was increased by one constable each at New Lynn, Mount Albert, and Newton Stations. A detective-sergeant was added to the strength of the Detective Branch.

A branch of the Criminal Registration Office was opened in June last at Auckland, and has proved of benefit.

The Offences Return for the year ending 31st December, 1928, shows a total of 8,909 offences reported, being a net increase of 48 offences over the previous year. Of the offences reported 8,207 were accounted for by arrest or summons, leaving 702 undetected.

A very gratifying decrease in real crime is shown over the past year. Deducting breaches of Motor-vehicles Act and Regulations from total of offences for 1927 and 1928, a drop of 328 in all other offences is shown in 1928. The percentage of detection has been well maintained.

The conduct of the police during the year has been increasingly satisfactory. The number of defaulters punished for breaches of Police Regulations has dropped from 25, charged with 46 breaches, in 1927, to 17, charged with 20 breaches, in 1928.

In the opinion of the officers in charge of the Auckland co-ordinated districts more care is necessary in licensing drivers of motor-vehicles, particularly in the case of drivers of vehicles plying for hire for the conveyance of passengers. The present age-limit is too low. The temptations of a big city are such that drivers of licensed taxis should be not less than twenty-one years of age.

The mysterious disappearance of a young woman named Elsie Walker from her place of employment at Papamoa, near Te Puke, created considerable public interest, and also some criticism of police efficiency, apparently based on an inadequate conception of the facts. This resulted in a Commission being set up to inquire into the conduct of the police in this particular case. The finding of the Commission absolved the police from blame.

INSPECTOR McILVENY, AUCKLAND METROPOLITAN DISTRICT.

The strength at Mount Albert was increased by placing a mounted constable there for patrol and inquiry work in addition to the one detailed for foot duty. An additional constable was located at Newton. The work at Newmarket Station is now very heavy and the work at Ellerslie Station is increasing rapidly.

During the year a new station was opened at New Lynn and a mounted constable placed in charge there. The population in that part of this district is steadily increasing and even now the station there is a busy one.

Regarding serious crime, there was one case of murder reported, as against three in 1927. In that instance the offender was arrested, found guilty, and sentenced to death (later commuted to imprisonment for life). The probable cause of the crime was jealousy.

The conduct of the police generally has been satisfactory, a few only having to be dealt with under the Police Regulations.