

POLICE DEPARTMENT.

As usual, there has been an almost entire absence of serious crime during the past year.

The following are extracts from the report of the Inspector of Police on the Department and police activities for the year :—

“The strength of the Rarotonga Police Force is the same as last year—viz., one Inspector (European), and one senior sergeant, one sergeant, and eight constables (all Natives): total, eleven.

“The whole of the Rarotonga Police Force can speak and write English, which is a great advantage to the European Inspector of Police.

“Senior Sergeant Ngatikao, who has been in the Rarotonga Police Force for the past sixteen years, has been fully trained in police work and Court procedure, and, should necessity arise, is quite capable of temporarily taking charge of the Police Force here, and also prosecuting in the Court. Sergeant Teariki has also been in the Police Force for sixteen years, and the two sergeants have proved themselves loyal officers of the Administration.

“A sitting of the High Court is held weekly in Avarua, when all police are usually present to give evidence and prove service of summons. After the sitting of each High Court all police are lectured on matters concerning police duties and procedure.

“I am pleased to be able to report that during the past year all members of the Police Force have behaved well, and in many cases have shown skill and ability in the discharge of their various duties.

“In the outer islands of the Cook Group the Resident Agent on each island is in charge of the local police. The number of Native police stationed on each island is as follows: Mauke, one sergeant and three constables; Aitutaki, one sergeant and five constables; Atiu, four constables; Mangaia, one sergeant and six constables; Mitiaro, three constables; Penrhyn, four constables; and Manihiki, five constables.

“On account of the scattered nature of the Cook Islands, and the time it would take to go round and inspect all the police, this has not been found practicable. During my term of office here, covering nearly six years, no serious crime needing my personal investigation has been reported, and the Resident Agents, together with their own Native police, have been able to preserve law and order successfully.

“For the year ending 1928 fifty cases of manufacturing intoxicating liquor were dealt with in the High Court. This year only twenty-four cases have been dealt with—a reduction of twenty-six convictions for manufacturing. The list of cases for consuming intoxicating liquor in 1928 was 682, and for this year 692—an increase of ten cases. For drunkenness, in 1928 there were nineteen convictions, and for this year only ten convictions were recorded—a reduction of nine cases. No cases of selling liquor, smuggling liquor, illegally landing liquor, and illegally importing liquor were detected for the last year. It will be seen from these figures that a slight improvement has taken place, mainly in the charges of manufacturing intoxicating liquor and drunkenness, both of which show a decrease.

“As Rarotonga is a prohibition island, mail-steamers keep their bars closed during the stay in port, and we have practically no trouble from this source.

“During the past year two lunatics (Natives) were sent to New Zealand for committal to an asylum.

“Usually all persons sentenced to imprisonment serve their sentences in the Rarotonga Gaol, and only in special cases are prisoners transferred to New Zealand. All prisoners, both in gaol and on parole, parade at the Public Works Office daily at 7 a.m., and work till 4 p.m. Mondays to Fridays, and till 12 noon on Saturdays.

“Serious crime during the past year has been rare, but there have been forty-two convictions for theft. These were mainly of a petty nature. Two young prisoners, on account of their criminal tendencies, have been transferred to a New Zealand gaol.

“New Motor and Traffic Regulations are urgently required, as motor traffic on this island is increasing by leaps and bounds. Every month the mail-steamers bring a further batch of new motor cars and trucks.

“Since the 1st January 289 dogs have been registered, and over a hundred stray dogs have been destroyed by the police.

“Since the 1st April, 1928, 260 picture-films have been censored for exhibition within the Cook Islands. A better class of picture-film is now being imported into Rarotonga. Films of educational value, topical gazettes of events in different parts of the world, and films of a comedy class are suitable for screening here.

“During the past year there have been fifty-one sittings of the High Court, and the total fines inflicted in Criminal cases was £1,039 19s. 6d. Of this amount the sum of £879 1s. 6d. has been collected by the police. The sum of £156 3s. was worked out on public works by Natives who were unable to pay their fines, leaving fines unpaid on the 31st March only £4 15s.”

PRINTING DEPARTMENT.

Owing to the death in June of Pure Pokia, who was one of our scholarship lads, work in this Department was carried on by another Native, under the supervision of Mr. S. Savage.

The value of printing plant, bulk paper, and printed forms in stock for the different Departments at 31st March was £543 16s. 3d.