

It is quite apparent that a large number of persons who are employed as barmen in licensed hotels in New Zealand are bookmakers or agents for bookmakers, and I consider that the time has arrived when the Licensing Act, 1908, and amendments should be amended to provide for the licensing of all barmen who are employed in hotels, on the same principle as persons who are licensed to sell liquor. If this is done provision should be made for cancelling of the license for at least three years—which should be a bar to further employment in any licensed hotel for that period—should a barman be convicted for any crime, serious breaches of the Licensing Act, 1908, and amendments (specified), or breaches of the Gaming Act, 1908, and amendments (specified). Section 43 of the Licensing Amendment Act, 1910, should be amended, making it an offence for any Native (defined) to be found in possession of any intoxicating liquor for consumption off licensed premises.

INSPECTOR MCCARTHY, INVERCARGILL DISTRICT.

I am of the opinion that the police-station at Orepuki could now be closed. There is a railway running through the district, and the work could be done from Tuatapere or Riverton.

The offences return for the year ended 31st December, 1931, shows an increase in petty thefts. A portion of this increase is due to a better system of recording crime reported during the year, and, no doubt, a large portion is due to the depression at present existing. Housebreaking and attempted housebreaking also show an increase, which was due to the actions of a gang, the members of which were subsequently arrested and sentenced to substantial terms of imprisonment.

On the 3rd July, 1931, the sum of £847 (the pay-roll of the Ocean Beach Freezing-works) was stolen from the motor-car of an employee of the Freezing Company, in Maitland Street, Invercargill. Two brothers were arrested for this offence on the 15th February, 1932, and were convicted and sentenced to terms of imprisonment. The stolen money was not recovered. Between September, 1931, and January of this year, a number of shops and offices were broken into and safes blown open with explosives. Early in January this year two men were arrested and charged with these offences and convicted. On the night of the 13th January, 1932, the premises of the Bank of New South Wales, at Edendale, were entered by two masked men armed with a .22 calibre rifle. They demanded the keys of the bank, but, resistance being offered, they ran away, leaving the rifle in the garden. Two days later the men were arrested on this charge, and were convicted and sentenced to substantial terms of imprisonment. One of the men convicted of the burglary of the bank premises was also convicted for the theft of the Ocean Beach pay-roll. On the 24th July, 1931, the dead body of a new-born male child was found on the foreshore of the estuary at Invercargill. There were no marks of violence on the body. Inquiry has failed to find the parents, or any explanation of how the body came to be in the water.

The conduct of the members of the Force in this district during the past year has been very satisfactory, the work of the detective staff being especially effective in breaking up a gang of dangerous criminals.

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