

The matter of breaches of the law committed by persons in charge of motor-vehicles continues to cause much concern. During the year under review a total of 1,119 offences under this heading were committed, being an increase of 277 on the previous year.

It has been suggested that the penalty for the misappropriation of motor-cars should be made more drastic. I would like to point out in this connection that the Courts do not in 50 per cent. of the cases dealt with impose the maximum penalty as it now stands. If persons with a tendency to these offences knew that they would receive the full penalty of three months' imprisonment if detected it would probably have a deterrent effect.

The conduct of the police in this district has been good. Twenty constables were dealt with for twenty-one breaches of the Police Regulations. Quite a number of these were breaches committed by temporary constables, who did not appear to appreciate the absolute necessity of strict punctuality and other matters of discipline.

I would again draw attention to the necessity for having section 278 of the Crimes Act, 1908, amended so as to include all buildings.

I also bring forward the suggestion again that provision be made that persons making fraudulent complaints to the police may be dealt with in a similar manner as is provided for in the Post and Telegraph Act, 1928, section 123 (b). We have numerous instances where persons make false complaints, and after considerable inquiries have been made it is found that the complaint is groundless, and the complainant ultimately admits it.

The exigencies of the Service here make it necessary that two new cars be supplied to cope with the work at this station, one to supplement those in use now and one to replace an old car. There is constant need for these cars. The area of country over which they can be used is so extensive that with efficient service in motor-cars the staff would be able to deal more promptly with urgent matters. When a vehicle is available a patrol of the suburban areas is instituted at night, which has been found to have had a deterring effect on house-breakers in those localities.

INSPECTOR FRASER, HAMILTON DISTRICT.

The general conduct of members of the Force in this district for the past twelve months has been good, and their duties have been performed satisfactorily.

Five constables were fined for breaches of the regulations.

The offences return for the year ending 31st December, 1932, shows the total number of all offences committed to be 2,078, compared with 2,036 for the previous twelve months, being an increase of 42.

Of all offences reported, 1,941 were accounted for by arrest or summons, leaving 137 undetected, or 93½ per cent. accounted for.

Of all the cases dealt with 174 males and 2 females were committed for trial or sentence, and of those committed 65 males were convicted.

No very serious crime was committed during the year.

INSPECTOR O'HALLORAN, GISBORNE DISTRICT.

I would like to point out that in order to have the beats worked properly two additional constables are required at Gisborne Station.

The offences return for the year ended 31st December, 1932, showed a total of 1,250 offences reported, as compared with 1,196 in the previous year, an increase of 54. Arrests or summonses resulted in 1,181 cases, leaving 69 undetected. Of the cases dealt with, 35 were committed for trial or sentence, of which 28 were convicted.

The most noticeable increases were in assaults, theft, false pretences, mischief, breach of the peace, found in common gaming-house, and found on licensed premises after closing-hours.

The district has been free from crime of a very serious nature during the year, with the exception of a robbery with violence committed on a Maori at Tokomaru Bay by two armed criminals, who were later apprehended by the Opotiki police. The police concerned have been commended for intelligence displayed and thoroughness of their work in so smartly arresting these armed criminals, who were wanted for offences committed all over the Dominion.

All offences of a serious nature have been satisfactorily cleared up and offenders arrested.

The conduct of all members of the Force here has been good during the year. Efficiency has been maintained, and there were no defaulters.

On the 16th September, 1932, the most severe earthquake ever experienced in Gisborne occurred, fortunately at night, otherwise there is no doubt that lives would have been lost. Considerable damage was done to the buildings in the business area and also to chimneys and tanks in the residential area, and this, together with the existing depression, has caused further hardship on the property-owners of this town and district.

INSPECTOR FITZPATRICK, NAPIER DISTRICT.

For the year ending 31st December last the total number of offences reported was 1,810, a decrease on the previous year of 153. Of the 1,810 cases reported, 1,704 were detected. The principal decrease relates to theft, false pretences, burglary, mischief, drunkenness, failing to pay maintenance-moneys, reckless or negligent driving, and intoxicated while in charge of motor-vehicles.

The principal increases were in house or shop breaking, receiving property dishonestly obtained, forgery, and selling or supplying liquor at unauthorized times.