

The decrease in offences is largely due to the departure of the floating population which invaded Napier during the rebuilding of the town after the earthquake and fire in February, 1931.

It is pleasant to report that during the year no serious crime has been reported in the district.

With the exception of a constable being dismissed from the Force, and two other constables being convicted for breaches of the Police Regulations, the conduct of the members of the Force has been excellent, and a high standard of efficiency maintained.

Following the earthquake and fire in Napier, another disaster occurred on the 28th December, 1932, at the entrance to the inner harbour, Port Ahuriri, when the m.v. "Tu Atu" and the launch "Doris" collided. The launch was conveying waterside workers from two vessels in the roadstead to the shore at the time of the collision, and ten of the unfortunate men were drowned. The town was again cast in gloom, and the sympathy of the citizens was extended to the relatives of the deceased men in a marked degree.

INSPECTOR RAWLE, NEW PLYMOUTH DISTRICT.

The offences return for the year ending December, 1932, shows a total of all offences committed to be 1,147, compared with 1,354 for the previous twelve months, being a decrease of 207 offences. Of the number reported 1,083 were accounted for by arrest or summons, equal to 94.4 per cent.

A serious crime, the murder of a woman and her two children, resulted in her husband being convicted on each charge and sentenced to death. The sentence was afterwards commuted to one of imprisonment for life. Apart from this, none of the crimes committed during the year call for special comment.

The conduct of the police during the past twelve months has been good and the duties satisfactorily performed.

Two members received "Records of merit" and in addition a reward of £10, and one a "Note in favour" for work well performed.

Two were fined for breaches of the regulations.

INSPECTOR WARD, WANGANUI DISTRICT.

The offences return for the year ending the 31st December, 1932, shows the total number of all offences committed to be 1,191, compared with 1,257 for the previous twelve months, being a decrease of 66. Of the number reported, 1,098 were accounted for by arrest or summons.

The principal increases were: House and shop breaking and attempts to commit these offences, theft from dwellings, forgery, false pretences, sly-grog selling and illegally dealing in liquor in proclaimed areas, indecent assault, and carnal knowledge.

The principal decreases were: Drunkenness, vagrancy, failing to maintain wives and children, selling or exposing liquor for sale, being found unlawfully on licensed premises, and thefts by servants.

The increases shown are probably due to the prevailing unemployment and the decreases to the same cause. Large numbers of working-men are now on relief work, and in consequence they have less money to spend on liquor, and at the same time the relief system enables vagrants to earn a little.

The most serious crime during the year was an attempted murder at Patea. The offender became enamoured of a married woman, and attempted to murder her husband by shooting him under cover of darkness. He was subsequently arrested and prosecuted to conviction.

The conduct of the police during the year has been good and the duties satisfactorily performed. Two members were punished, one under the regulations and one under statute law (Motor-vehicles Act).

INSPECTOR HARVEY, PALMERSTON NORTH.

The offences return for the year ending 31st December, 1932, shows the total number of offences reported during the year as 1,520, as compared with 1,478 the previous year, an increase of 42. Of the offences reported 1,431 were dealt with by arrest or summons.

The trial for murder of the man referred to in my last annual report as having shot his father and mother was not proceeded with as he was declared to be insane and unfit to plead. He was subsequently placed in a mental hospital.

A youth was charged with murder by shooting his brother in a cow-shed on their father's farm. He was brought in "Not guilty" by a jury at the Supreme Court, Palmerston North.

The conduct of members of the Force of all ranks has been exceptionally good, and the duties performed satisfactorily. There was only one defaulter.

SUPERINTENDENT EMERSON, WELLINGTON DISTRICT.

The authorized strength of the district has been increased by one, due to the appointment of a constable at Khandallah.

For the year ending 31st December, 1932, the total number of offences reported was 6,002, a decrease of 343. The principal increases were in the following: Seditious offences, indecent assault, common assault, theft, house or shop breaking, &c., mischief, inciting violence, &c., failing to maintain wife or children, and opium-smoking.

There were decreases in indecently assaulting a male, false pretences, forgery and uttering, breach of peace, drunkenness, unlawfully using horses and motor-cars.

On 15th April, 1932, a girl was brutally murdered at Upper Hutt by a young man, who was found guilty and sentenced to death. The sentence was later commuted to imprisonment for life.