

INSPECTOR LEWIN, NELSON DISTRICT.

For the year ending 31st December, 1932, the total number of offences reported was 857, compared with 972 for the previous twelve months, being a decrease of 115. Of all offences reported, 767 were accounted for by arrest or summons, leaving 90 undetected.

There were increases in theft, false pretences, receiving stolen property, forgery, mischief, and assault. The main decreases were in shop-breaking, breaches of the peace, using indecent language, stealing postal packets, breaches of the Motor-vehicles Act, and breaches of the Licensing Act.

There were no serious criminal offences during the year, except for the arrest of a man for the brutal murder of a man at Picton in the previous year; he was found guilty and sentenced to death, the death sentence being duly carried out.

The general conduct of the members of the Force in the district has been good, only two constables being dealt with for breaches of police regulations.

I suggest that consideration be given to amending section 4 of the Crimes Amendment Act, 1910, to bring it in line with section 8 of the Prevention of Crime (Borstal Institutions Establishment) Act, 1924. Under the former Act an offender has to commit an offence punishable with more than three months' imprisonment before a Magistrate can make an order of detention for reformatory purposes, while under the latter Act, if an offender commits an offence punishable with imprisonment for more than one month, he may be ordered to be detained in a Borstal Institution for not more than three years.

INSPECTOR LOPDELL, GREYMOUTH DISTRICT.

The offences return for the year ending 31st December, 1932, shows a total of 1,098 offences, against 1,462 for the previous year. The principal items giving this 25 per cent. decrease were: Selling and supplying liquor after hours, found on licensed premises, and drunkenness. This result followed closer police supervision. The other decreases are the usual fluctuations, which do not call for comment.

Under the heading of serious crime two happenings call for record. On 8th September, 1932, a prospector at Ross was shot by a .22 rifle bullet in the lower part of his abdomen. A man was arrested for the offence of attempted murder. The evidence against him was very strong, but he was acquitted at the Supreme Court at Greymouth.

The other was the exploding of three bombs, the first of which was on the roof of the residence of the Inspector of Police, where, fortunately, only little damage was done. The other two, one in a Borough Council shed and the other in a railway yard, did little damage, but for a time many of the residents were unnerved. Evidence sufficient to arrest the offender was not forthcoming, notwithstanding an offer of £200 reward by the Government. The motive is believed to have been to intimidate the police against activity in enforcing licensing laws.

The general conduct of the members of the Force in the district has been good and their work has been satisfactory. There were two defaulters, one of whom was dismissed.

The Ross shooting case suggested the desirability of the Arms Act, 1920, being amended to provide that on proper grounds a Magistrate should be empowered to prohibit for a definite time a person from having in his possession any firearm.

SUPERINTENDENT CUMMINGS, CHRISTCHURCH DISTRICT.

The conduct of both branches of the Service has been very good. It was necessary to deal with a few members of the Uniform Branch for offences under the regulations, two only being of a serious nature. Both branches of the Service worked together admirably during the year.

The year provided a hard time for all members of the Service. In April there was some minor industrial trouble, and the tramway strike followed in May. This strike started on the 4th May and lasted for a little over two weeks. There was a good deal of violence. The police, assisted by the citizens who volunteered their services as temporary constables, performed very fine work in maintaining law and order and preserving the peace. In the spring the freezing-workers' strike began, but did not give a great deal of trouble. I cannot speak too highly of the excellent work done by both branches of the Service in a very trying year. Annual leave had to be suspended owing to industrial trouble and the outbreak of serious crime.

There were increases in the following offences: False pretences, housebreaking, receiving stolen property, forgery, and mischief. As was to be expected, there was a substantial increase in offences arising out of the strikes. There has been a substantial decrease in drunkenness.

One casualty in the Service occurred during the year. A constable, while on duty riding a bicycle, came into collision with a taxi, breaking his leg. Complications set in, resulting in death.

The strength of the district was increased during the year by eleven constables. This gave much needed relief.

The detective staff requires to be strengthened by three additional men to keep pace with the times. The present staff cannot adequately cope with the work they are called upon to perform nor give it the attention it demands. Three more men are urgently needed.

INSPECTOR BIRD, TIMARU DISTRICT.

The total number of offences reported during the year ended 31st December, 1932, was 758, as against 973 the previous year, being a decrease of 215. The principal increases were in theft, damaging telegraph equipment, and breaches of Arms Act.