

INSPECTOR LOPDELL, HAMILTON DISTRICT.

The authorized strength of seventy-three is ten in excess of the authorized strength on the 31st March, 1936; this is accounted for by the transfer of Waihi Station, with five men, Paeroa with two men, and Kerepehi with one man, from Auckland District to Hamilton District during the year, and also four men being added to the strength at Rotorua Station. One detective was transferred and not replaced, and one constable withdrawn from Putaruru Station.

An increase of one constable is required in each of the following stations: Te Kuiti, which is on the main Auckland-Wellington highway, and requires a constable on duty during the night, which the present staff does not permit; Frankton Junction, where the present staff is not sufficient to attend to important trains and also beat duty; and Tauranga, where a growing population and the popularity of Mount Maunganui as a holiday resort has created a demand greater than the present staff can cope with. Hamilton town is expanding rapidly, requiring greater supervision and inquiry duties. I require at least three extra constables for beat duty and one constable for inquiry duty; total of four. The detective office requires another man experienced in country work. These eight men will only meet our needs under existing hours of work.

The work in the district office now requires the services of a third clerk.

During the year ending 31st December, 1936, the offences reported were 2,870, against 2,114 for the previous year. The chief increases were—false pretences, petty theft, theft as a servant, common assault, indecent assault, drunkenness, found unlawfully on licensed premises, breaches of prohibition orders, intoxicated in charge of cars, reckless driving, and other motor breaches. These account for 610 of the 756 increase during the year.

I regret having to again draw attention to the number of persons charged with being intoxicated while being in charge of motor-vehicles. Last year there were thirty-three charges, this year eighty-four charges (four of these were dismissed). There is no evidence that this ascending scale has abated. When it is realized that these eighty convicted drivers are only a portion of such offenders on the road, and they are confined to this one Hamilton District, some idea of the danger to the orderly users of the roads will be realized. This record bears an intimate relationship to the increases during the same period of drunkenness from 222 charges to 472 charges, and other liquor offences, all of which point to where safety measures should begin.

There has been no serious crime during the year.

The conduct of the Police Force in this district throughout the year has been excellent. All ranks have co-operated in a splendid way. Only one minor breach of discipline was dealt with.

I think that the sale of liquor exempted from the operation of the Licensing Act, by section 3c, should be brought under regulation. At the present time a person, other than one having a wine-maker's license, under the Amendment Act of 1914, section 11, can sell quantities of these liquors exceeding two gallons at a time, at any time or place unrestricted. This is the cause of much of our trouble with liquor at country dances.

INSPECTOR EDWARDS, GISBORNE DISTRICT.

There has been an increase of three constables since last year—viz., two for beat duty at Gisborne and one at Bartletts.

The time has arrived when a police-station should be opened at Te Kaha and a regular constable placed in charge. The work there has been increasing each year, and a full-time constable is now required. Te Kaha is forty-seven miles from Opotiki and fifty miles from Te Araroa, which are the two adjoining subdistricts.

Some assistance is also necessary for the constables at Ruatorea and Tikitiki, the work at both stations having increased to such an extent as to occupy the men's time from early morning until late at night.

As the population at both Whakatane and Opotiki increases so the volume of police work becomes greater, and the time has arrived when consideration should be given to the appointment of an additional constable at each of these two stations.

A new station was opened on 12th November, 1936, at Bartletts, on the Napier-Gisborne railway-construction works, and an unmarried constable placed in charge.

The offences return for the year ending 31st December, 1936, showed a total of 1,171 offences reported, as compared with 1,106 the previous year, an increase of 65. Arrests or summonses resulted in 1,113 cases, leaving 58 undetected. Of the cases dealt with, 38 were committed for trial or sentence, 32 of these being convicted.

The most noticeable increases were in assault, carnally knowing girls, petty theft, theft of animals, disorderly behaviour and breaches of the peace, drunkenness, unlawfully using horses, motor-cars, &c., found on licensed premises after closing-hours, and reckless or negligent driving under Motor-vehicles Act.

The most noticeable decreases were false pretences, house or shop breaking, forgery, and failing to maintain.

The district has been free from crime of a serious nature during the year. There is a noticeable increase in carnal-knowledge cases, but in these cases the majority of the parties concerned were Maoris.

With the exception of one constable convicted for a breach of the Police Regulations and two who were dismissed, the conduct of the members of the Force has been very good during the past year.