

Conditions will not be satisfactory until the Department can use the extra space at the Central Station now used by other Departments and a new station is built at Mount Cook. I would suggest that a start be made on the new building as soon as possible.

During the year the general conduct of the members of the Force has been good and their duties have been satisfactorily performed. The detectives have carried out their work efficiently, and both branches of the service have worked exceedingly well together. Nine constables were dealt with for minor breaches of the regulations.

The total number of offences reported during the year ended 31st December, 1937, was 7,616, compared with 6,266 for the previous twelve months, being an increase of 1,350.

Of all the offences reported, 7,384 were accounted for by arrests or summonses being issued, the undetected offences numbering 232. Of the cases dealt with, 240 males and 2 females were committed for trial or sentence, and of those committed 221 males and 1 female were convicted.

No serious crimes were committed during the year.

The principal increases in crime were false statements, assault, theft, false pretences, burglary, house and shop breaking, mischief, and motoring offences.

There were decreases in breaches of Licensing Act and "being found in gaming-houses."

INSPECTOR LEWIN, NELSON DISTRICT.

The strength of the Force in this district is thirty-eight, being an increase of five constables during the year—three at Nelson and two at Blenheim—for the purpose of giving effect to the 48-hour week, which seems to be working satisfactorily and appreciated very much by the men.

I wish to suggest the desirability of having a detective permanently stationed at Blenheim. The work there has increased considerably, and the inquiry constable is unable to cope adequately with that work: and, as a consequence, it is necessary to detail beat-duty constables to make minor inquiries in the town, so that the work can be carried out as expeditiously as circumstances permit. As may be deduced, the beats are consequently somewhat neglected and do not receive the attention that they should. I feel sure that, if a detective were appointed, his time would be fully occupied. Blenheim is eighty-one miles from Nelson.

I also recommend that a station be opened at Renwicktown, so that, owing to the increase in population, that part of Blenheim sub-district can be adequately supervised.

For the year ended 31st December, 1937, the total number of offences was 886, compared with 788 for the previous twelve months, an increase of 98. Of all offences reported, 847 were accounted for by arrest or summons, leaving 39 undetected.

There were decreases in theft, burglary, drunkenness, and Sunday trading. There were increases in assault, false pretences, mischief, unlawful conversion of motor-vehicles, breaches of the Licensing Act, and opium-smoking. The most noticeable increase is that of 131 per cent. for breaches of the Motor-vehicles Act and Regulations. This may be due to more prosperous times and to the increasing number of vehicles using the highways.

No serious crimes were reported during the year.

The conduct of members of the Force has been good. The majority of the men show a keen interest in their work, and the duties have been performed in a satisfactory manner.

It is generally admitted that sheep-stealing is an offence which is prevalent in New Zealand, and it is one that is difficult to detect, involving considerable time in investigation: an offender invariably elects to be tried by a jury, which is usually composed of men who have no knowledge of stock, and in numerous instances the accused is acquitted regardless of the Crown's evidence. If power were given to Magistrates to deal with cases of sheep-stealing where the value does not exceed £50, I am of the opinion that it would have a tendency to stop a certain amount of this class of offence and, in addition, save considerable expense.

INSPECTOR SCOTT, GREYMOUTH DISTRICT.

On the 31st March, 1938, the strength of the Force in the district was forty-eight.

During the year a detective was appointed to assist the detective-sergeant at Greymouth. Two extra constables at Greymouth and one at Hokitika were appointed to enable the 48-hour week to be worked, and one constable appointed to the new station opened at Bruce Bay. The Force in this district is now up to its authorized strength.

The offences return for the year ended the 31st December, 1937, shows a total of 1,112, against 997 for the previous year, an increase of 115 offences. Of all the offences reported, 1,030 were dealt with by arrest or summons. The principal increases were in thefts from dwellings, house and shop breaking, persons found illegally on licensed premises, persons intoxicated in charge of motor-vehicles, and general breaches of the Motor-vehicles Act.

The principal decreases were simple thefts, false pretences, and mischief.

The only serious crimes reported during the year were one of destroying a dwellinghouse by explosives and one of negligently driving a motor-vehicle and thereby causing death. In each case the offender was apprehended and convicted of the offence. There was also one case of arson, to which the offender pleaded guilty, and was committed for sentence.

During the year two constables were dealt with for breaches of the Police Regulations, but with these exceptions the conduct of the police throughout the district has been excellent and their work and general efficiency up to the required standard.

The provisions of section 41 of the Statutes Amendment Act, 1936, giving accused persons the right to change their plea to one of "guilty" after being committed for trial, have proved an advantage,