

INSPECTOR POWELL, NEW PLYMOUTH DISTRICT.

The offences return for the past year shows the total of all offences committed to be 1,329, as compared with 1,401 offences for the previous year, a decrease of 72 offences. Of the number reported, 1,263 were accounted for by either arrest or summons.

The most notable decreases in crime are indecent assault, common assault, theft, and reckless and negligent driving. The principal increases are false pretences, mischief, grossly indecent acts, unlawfully using motor-cars, being intoxicated in charge of motor-cars, and breaches of prohibition orders.

The district has been free from crime of a serious nature.

The conduct of the police has been very good during the year, two members of the Force only having to be dealt with for breaches of regulations.

The duties have been performed in a satisfactory manner and the uniform and detective branches of the service have worked harmoniously together.

The strength of the Force has been increased by six constables—four at New Plymouth, one at Hawera, and one at Stratford. Five of these are for the purpose of carrying into effect the 48-hour week, while the other is to increase the strength in the ordinary way.

The 48-hour week is a decided improvement, and members of the Force appreciate it very much indeed.

I would again draw attention to the necessity of further increasing the staff at New Plymouth. The work is increasing, and, with the amount of escorting, annual leave, and relieving duty to be done, at least two more constables are required. An extra constable is also required at Hawera, as the work at that station is increasing.

INSPECTOR LANDER, WANGANUI DISTRICT.

The authorized strength of the Force in this district on the 31st March, 1938, was fifty-four, being an increase of eight constables during the year. The additional constables were distributed as follows: One to Taumarunui, one to National Park, one to Patea, and five to Wanganui City. The increases at Taumarunui and at Wanganui were necessitated by the working of the 48-hour week. The stationing of a constable at National Park was rendered necessary owing to the increase of police duty in that area. The addition of one constable to the strength at Patea was necessary in view of the progress of that town and district. The increases in strength were welcome, and facilitate the performance of duties in the areas affected.

An additional sergeant is required in the city and an additional constable at both Taihape and Ohakune. An additional sergeant here is required to increase the supervision of beat duty and to relieve the senior sergeant to some extent. The time of the one sergeant here is taken up a great deal in relieving duty in respect of annual leave and sickness. The strength at Taihape was not increased on the coming into operation of the 48-hour week. The incidence of duty there is, however, becoming greater, and an addition to the strength is required. The same remarks apply to the Ohakune-Raetihi sub-districts. Under present conditions the constables there are seldom able to take their weekly days off. An additional constable at Ohakune could be kept fully employed, and much needed additional supervision of the railway-station and that part of the town adjacent thereto could be provided.

The offences return for the year ended 31st December, 1937, shows a total of 1,120 offences reported. This is a decrease of 84 on the total—1,204—for the previous year. Of the total—1,120—reported, 1,061 were accounted for by arrest or summons.

The principal increases were house or shop breaking, selling liquor without a license, and breaches of the Motor-vehicles Act. There was an increase of two only in drunkenness.

The principal decreases were theft (petty), failing to maintain wife or children, selling or supplying liquor at unauthorized times, and reckless or negligent driving of motor-vehicles. I have no comment to make with respect to the increases or decreases. I think that they represent ordinary fluctuations from year to year.

A young married woman was seriously assaulted late at night in Anzac Parade, Wanganui East, on 2nd October last. The assault was violent and unprovoked. An instrument was used. The victim suffered a fractured skull, but fortunately she has made a good recovery. Very intensive inquiries were made by the local police, assisted by detectives from Auckland, Palmerston North, and New Plymouth, but the offender has not been traced, nor has the weapon used to commit the offence been found.

Three alleged attempts to murder were investigated, and the offenders—two males and one female—were dealt with at the Supreme Court. The two males used firearms and the female used a knife. Convictions were entered in each case on minor counts of the indictments.

One offender was dealt with for discharging a firearm with intent at a constable. At the Supreme Court he was found unable to plead, on the ground of insanity, and was dealt with under section 32 of the Mental Defectives Act, 1911.

One detective and four constables were dealt with for breaches of the regulations during the year. The conduct, otherwise, of the members of the Force in the district has been very good, and in many cases, in the performance of duty, a high degree of efficiency has been shown.

INSPECTOR CUMMINGS, PALMERSTON NORTH DISTRICT.

The authorized strength of the district has been increased by seven constables, three of them to assist the inauguration of the 48-hour week.

Marton Junction Police-station was closed in July, 1933, for reasons of economy. I find that this is now a very busy town, with a population of approximately 1,100 resident at the railway junction,