

Auckland Branch. On 31st March, 1939, the finger-print collection in Auckland totalled 6,619 sets.

During the year 886 sets of finger-prints were received from the Mount Eden Prison or taken at the Criminal Registration Branch, and were duly classified, searched, and filed.

The photographs of 239 prisoners were taken, and 1,195 prints were taken from the negatives; also a large number of photographs of scenes of crimes and motor accidents, &c., were taken; the total number of photographs produced by the Branch during the year being 2,020.

The remanded-prisoner forms, together with the results of the cases inserted, for 464 prisoners were dealt with and returned to the Criminal Registration Branch in Wellington.

In 16 cases offenders who would not otherwise have been known as having been previously convicted were traced by their finger-prints. In several of these cases persons arrested at the time of, or soon after, their arrival in New Zealand were found to have criminal records overseas, and some were able to be deported on that account.

The "*modus operandi*" or "classification of crime" index is working efficiently, and, although in operation for approximately only one year, already over 3,000 index cards are filed.

ARMS BUREAU.

The Arms Bureau has been fully occupied, particularly with the investigation of shooting accidents, selection of firearms for the collection of arms suitable for ballistic tests, and lecturing to police regarding firearms. The lecture tours covered the North Island twice and the South Island once during the year. A balopticon lantern was used in most of the lectures, and was of great assistance in demonstrating the effects of gunshot wounds and physical exhibits such as bullets and shells. Practical instruction in the use of official weapons has also been given to members of the Force, and satisfactory progress has been made.

During the past three years all districts have been visited at least twice, and the majority of them three or four times, and instruction in the handling and care of automatic pistols and other firearms has been given to the members of the Force. In addition, each class of recruits in the Training Depot has been given similar individual instruction during the period of training.

The lectures have been well received and appreciated. Special attention has been given to the causes of accidents with firearms, and it is hoped that the better understanding of these causes will assist the police in their investigations and enable them to give some good advice to young sportsmen who apply for firearms certificates, and so help to minimize these accidents.

In response to representations to manufacturers of firearms to provide safer mechanical designs, several firms are now making greatly improved models, and have in several instances withdrawn unsatisfactory ones. It is safe to say that the worst types of small calibre rifles (.22 in.) have now been eliminated from those being imported for sale. The improved models do not appear to be any more costly to the public than the unsatisfactory ones.

The double-barrelled hammer shotgun is again a heavy contributor to the accident rate. There have been thirteen accidents with it during the year. The safer hammerless gun has been responsible for only four, which is a higher percentage than in any other year.

The following is a brief summary of the accidents with firearms for the year ended 31st March, 1939: Fatal, 19; non-fatal, 28—a total of 47. Hammer shotguns, 13 (6 fatal); hammerless shotguns, 4 (2 fatal); .303 rifles, 3 (all fatal); .22 rifles, 24 (7 fatal); pistols, 1 (fatal); other weapons, 2 (non-fatal).

There were three other shooting fatalities which the Coroner was unable to decide were accident or suicide.

The average age of the victims was twenty-seven years, and all except two were males. It is safe to assume that there were many other accidents of a less serious nature which did not come under the notice of the police.

Attention is drawn to the increasing number of accidents caused through carrying loaded firearms in motor-cars and leaving arms and ammunition within reach of children.

The recently acquired scientific equipment, which includes a ballistic comparison microscope, has proved of great assistance, and the Arms Bureau, in collaboration with the Criminal Registration Branch, has assisted the police in several important investigations.

POLICE BUILDINGS, ETC.

The following works in connection with police-stations have been carried out during the year by the Public Works Department:—

New police-stations were erected at Balclutha, Ellerslie, Linwood, Manaiia, Wataroa, Moera, Pleasant Point, and St. Clair; an office was built at Tokaanu; additions and alterations were carried out at Manurewa, Ruatoria, and Wellington Central, and garages were provided at Greymouth, Otahuhu, and Portobello. Houses and sections were purchased for police-stations at Khandallah and Northland. Sites for police-stations were acquired at Clive, Hamilton, Levin, Mission Bay, Mount Cook (Wellington), Nelson, New Plymouth, Paekakariki, St. Heliers Bay, Waiheke Island, Wellington Central, and Whangarei.

Repairs, renovations, and/or improvements were effected at the following stations:—

Whangarei District. Hikurangi, Houhora, Kaikohe, Kaitiaki, Mangonui, Rawene, and Waipu.

Auckland District. Auckland (Central), Avondale, Balmoral, Birkenhead, Epsom, Freeman's Bay, Helensville, Henderson, Howick, Manurewa, Mount Albert, Newmarket, Newton, Northcote, Onehunga, Otahuhu, Papatoetoe, Point Chevalier, Ponsonby, Pukekohe, Takapuna, Thames, Warkworth, and Whitianga.