

EXTRACTS FROM THE ANNUAL REPORTS OF OFFICERS IN CHARGE OF DISTRICTS.

INSPECTOR O'HARA, WHANGAREI DISTRICT.

During the past year the strength of the district has not increased, but additions are required as follows: A constable at Kamo, a constable on the northern side of Hokianga Harbour, and a sergeant with a sub-district embracing the Bay of Islands County.

The offences reported show the usual fluctuating increases and decreases with no extraordinary features.

One crime of murder was reported. The body of a child was found on the bank of the Wairoa River. As the result of inquiries a young woman was arrested for the murder of her illegitimate child, and was dealt with at the Supreme Court.

The conduct of the police has been good and no breach of discipline was reported.

SUPERINTENDENT CUMMINGS, AUCKLAND DISTRICT.

The district was taken charge of by me on 18th February, 1939.

On 31st March, 1939, the strength of the Force was 320, of all ranks.

I recommend an increase of fifteen constables at the Central Station, one constable for Pukekohe, and two sergeants—one for Takapuna and one for Mount Eden. The increase would enable all the necessary relieving duty to be carried out, and generally enable all requirements to be met adequately and efficiently.

A new modern station is urgently required at Auckland Central.

During the year a new police-station and a new residence for a sergeant were built and opened at Ellerslie.

Several of the stations in the district have been renovated during the year, some are at present being renovated, while a few others require it.

An additional constable was appointed to both Parnell and Otahuhu Stations.

The offences return for the year ended 31st December, 1938, shows a total of 12,328 offences reported, as compared with 7,739 for the previous year, an increase of 4,589. Of the total reported, 11,339 were accounted for by arrest or summons. The principal increases were in false pretences, declarations in connection with unemployment, unnatural offences, indecent assault on males, attempted suicide, assault, petty thefts, thefts by clerks and servants, false pretences, house and shop breaking, breaches of the peace, drunkenness, profane and indecent language, vagrancy, assaulting and obstructing police, unlawful conversion of motor-cars, failing to maintain wives and children, ship-desertion, breaches of prohibition orders, being intoxicated in charge of motor-vehicles, reckless and negligent driving, and other breaches of the Motor-vehicles Act and regulations.

There were decreases in the cases of carnally knowing girls under sixteen years, forgery, mischief, Sunday trading, being found in common gaming-house, stealing postal packets, selling liquor without a license, and opium-smoking.

The following serious crimes occurred:—

Robbery under Arms: On 8th August, 1938, two men armed with a shot-gun robbed a man of a leather brief-bag containing £219 9s. which was the property of a taxi company. One offender, following his arrest in Sydney, Australia, was sentenced to four years' hard labour, as also was his accomplice, who was arrested in Christchurch.

Demanding Money with Menaces: Pretending to be an Electric-power Board Inspector, a man called on 20th December, 1938, at a house in Remuera, assaulted the occupant, and demanded £2 in money. He was sentenced for these offences to three years' hard labour and declared an habitual criminal.

Interfering with Human Remains, and Arson: On 6th February, 1939, two men arrived in New Zealand from Australia. They took a bach at Piha, and allegedly burned it down on the night of 11th to 12th February, 1939. One man escaped and reported that the other, who was insured for £40,000, had been burned to death. It was later discovered that a grave at Waikumete had been interfered with and the body removed. Following extensive investigations, both men were arrested on charges of interfering with human remains, and arson. They were convicted and sentenced to four years' and two years' imprisonment respectively.

The conduct of members of the Force in the district has been satisfactory during the year, a fairly high standard of efficiency being maintained and both branches of the service performing good work.

Twenty constables were dealt with for breaches of the regulations.

I would recommend that section 278 of the Crimes Act, 1908, be amended so as to include *all* buildings.

I suggest that section 55 of the Police Offences Act, 1927, be amended to deal with persons escaping from police lock-ups, so that the offender may be dealt with summarily.

I recommend that "enclosed area" in sections 52 (i) and 54 of the Police Offences Act, 1927, be defined to include that portion of land around a house or building which would in the ordinary manner have been enclosed with a fence. This would deal with schools, &c., that have no gates on their property.

I also recommend that section 189 (b) of the Justices of the Peace Act, 1927, be repealed so that offenders with a previous conviction who come before the Court on indictment may be dealt with summarily. If this amendment were made, it would dispense with sending a number of offenders to the Supreme Court and save considerable unnecessary expense. They would still have the right of trial by jury.