

Approval has been given for the opening of a new station at Tuai. A constable has been selected, and will take charge at an early date.

For the year ended 31st December, 1938, the total number of offences reported was 1,893, an increase on the previous year of 191. Of the offences reported 1,790 were accounted for by arrests or summonses, leaving 103 undetected.

The principal increases were theft (undescribed), drunkenness, found on licensed premises, selling or supplying liquor at unauthorized times, and reckless or negligent driving.

The principal decreases were false pretences, false statements (Employment Promotion Act), and minor breaches of the Motor-vehicles Act.

The increased number of thefts were mostly of a petty nature, and juveniles were responsible for the majority of them. The increase in drunkenness is no doubt due to the increased spending-power of the people, while the vigilance of the police is responsible for the increased number of convictions under the Licensing Act. The increase in reckless and negligent driving can be accounted for by the heavy increase in motor traffic during the past year.

On 2nd October, 1938, a woman was fatally shot at her home at Westshore. A young man was arrested for the offence and charged with murder. The jury returned a verdict of manslaughter, and he was sentenced to twelve years' hard labour.

The conduct of the members of the Force has been very good. There were no defaulters during the year.

INSPECTOR POWELL, NEW PLYMOUTH DISTRICT.

On 31st March, 1939, the authorized strength of the Force was fifty.

An extra constable has been allocated to Hawera during the year, and will prove a decided advantage. I would like to draw attention again to the necessity of increasing the strength of the New Plymouth Station by two constables.

The offences return for the year ending 31st December, 1938, shows that the total of all offences reported to be 1,402, as compared with 1,329 for the previous year, an increase of 73 offences. Of the number reported, 1,330 were accounted for by either arrest or summons.

The most noticeable decrease is mischief. The principal increases are house and shop breaking (there were forty-four cases of this nature reported, out of which 39 cases were successfully dealt with), drunkenness, failure to pay maintenance moneys, offences against the provisions of no-license in Native proclaimed areas, and breaches of the Motor-vehicles Act.

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

The duties have been carried out in a satisfactory manner, the uniform and detective branches of the service working well together.

SUPERINTENDENT LANDER, WANGANUI DISTRICT.

The authorized strength of the force on the 31st March, 1939, was fifty-five. This is an increase of one constable during the year, added to the strength at Taihape. It was rendered necessary owing to the increase of police duty in that sub-district and to the operation of the forty-eight-hour week. No increase had been made there when that system commenced.

An additional sergeant and a detective are required for city duty, also an additional constable for Ohakune. The additional sergeant is required to improve supervision of beat duty and to relieve the senior sergeant. The detective is needed as an addition to the local staff. An additional constable at Ohakune would provide more supervision at the railway-station and that portion of the town adjacent thereto, as well as provide relief on the weekly day off there and at Raetihi.

The offences return for the year ended 31st December, 1938, shows a total of 1,423 offences reported. This is an increase of 303 on the previous year, 1937. Of the 1,423 offences reported, 1,382 were accounted for by arrest or summons.

The principal increases were house or shop breaking, breaches of the peace, drunkenness, bookmaking, failing to maintain wives or children, breaches of prohibition orders, found on licensed premises during closing-hours, selling or exposing liquor for sale without a license, supplying liquor to Natives in proclaimed districts, being intoxicated in charge of a motor-vehicle, and other breaches of the Motor-vehicles Act. The principal decreases were carnally knowing girls, burglary, and found in common gaming-houses.

It will be noticed that the increases are principally in connection with breaches of the Licensing Act and offences the cause of which was over-indulgence in intoxicating liquor. This was probably brought about by increased spending-power in the hands of irresponsible members of the community. The increase in house and shop breaking was traced mainly to young offenders. In some instances a lack of home control was noticeable, but in many cases the offences were committed to gain money or convertible property for purposes of pleasure.

The only serious crimes dealt with during the year were unnatural offences, 6; indecent assaults on males, 4; attempted incest, 2; putting explosive substances in places with intent to do bodily harm, 2; setting man-trap, 1. The three last-mentioned offences were committed by males, caused probably by unwarranted jealousy. They are not likely to recur. One male was convicted and sentenced for causing death by driving a motor-vehicle while intoxicated. The vehicle driven by him collided with a passing motor-car, a young woman, a passenger in the passing car, being killed.

There was no serious undetected crime.

The conduct of members of the Force in the district was very good. In many instances a high degree of efficiency was shown in the performance of duty. One constable only was dealt with for breaches of regulations during the year, and he was fined.