

The duties of the police in connection with traffic accidents are onerous and exacting. The use of motor-vehicles owned by members of the Force both at fixed and mileage rates has proved to be of wonderful value in providing mobility to attend to such duty expeditiously, particularly on main highways and country roads. The judicious use of these cars has also proved very effective in expediting inquiries into offences reported where prompt action is essential.

INSPECTOR SCOTT, PALMERSTON NORTH DISTRICT.

The authorized strength of the Force in this district on the 31st March, 1939, was fifty-eight, being an increase of two sergeants during the year, one being appointed to Marton and one to Pahiataua Station.

An additional sergeant and two constables are required in Palmerston North City. The additional sergeant is necessary to relieve the senior sergeant and five sergeants in the district for annual leave, and to improve the supervision over the beat-duty constables, especially at night. The two additional constables are necessary on account of the rapidly increasing population and consequent increase in inquiries, and also to enable more effective patrol duty to be carried out.

The new police buildings which are in the course of construction at Palmerston North should be ready for occupation in the near future.

The offences return for the year ending 31st December, 1938, shows a total of 2,218 offences reported, against 1,761 for the previous year, an increase of 457. Of the total number of offences reported, 2,148 were dealt with by arrest or summons.

The principal increases were in thefts, false pretences, house and shop breaking, mischief, breaches of the Gaming and Licensing Acts, reckless or negligent driving causing death; but the most notable increase was in the number of persons found in charge of motor-vehicles while in a state of intoxication, no less than ninety-nine persons being dealt with for this class of offence, an increase of sixty-nine over the previous year.

The principal decreases were in offences against morality, trespass on racecourses, failing to maintain wives and children, and breaches of the Employment Promotion Act.

On the 10th August, 1938, a sexual offence of a serious nature was committed on a child seven years of age. The offender was subsequently apprehended and sentenced to five years' imprisonment.

On the 5th November, 1938, an old lady, eighty-two years of age, was assaulted and robbed at Levin. The offender tied her to a chair and threatened to strangle her if she called out. He then stole a sum of money from her purse. He was later arrested and sentenced to three years' imprisonment.

The conduct of the police during the year has been very good and a high standard of efficiency maintained. There were no defaulters.

SUPERINTENDENT LEWIN, WELLINGTON DISTRICT.

On the 31st March last the authorized strength of the district was 240 of all ranks.

During the year the authorized strength was increased by one sergeant, to make better provision for relieving duty on account of annual leave, sickness, &c., one detective-sergeant for duty at Lower Hutt, and one constable for duty at Northland following the establishment of a police-station there.

I consider that an increase in the strength of the city Force is urgently required, and recommend the appointment of four additional men at Wellington Central, two at Taranaki Street, and two at Mount Cook.

Kilbirnie is a growing district that has received a great influx of motor traffic since the opening of the new tunnel, and includes Hataitai and Evans Bay. The present staff is not sufficient to carry out properly the work entailed.

I recommend that the strength at Kilbirnie, Petone, Lower Hutt, and Wellington South be increased by one constable in each case. This is necessary in order to cope with the many duties now devolving on the police.

The total number of offences reported during the year ended 31st December, 1938, was 7,304, compared with 7,616 for the previous year, a decrease of 312.

The chief increases were breaches of the Motor-vehicles Act, found unlawfully on licensed premises, gaming offences, breaches of the peace, and attempted house-breaking. Substantial decreases were shown in the case of false statements and declarations, indecent assault on males, theft, burglary, house or shop breaking, reckless or negligent driving, Sunday trading, and sly-grog selling.

On the 7th May, 1938, two members of the crew of the s.s. "Pakeha," which was lying berthed at the Picton Wharf, were painting the ship's side when they discovered a suit-case resting on the edge of a beam underneath the wharf. Upon investigation it was found to contain human remains, and the Picton police were at once notified.

Police examination showed the contents to be the torso of a male person; and later, with the services of a diver, a further suitcase containing a human head and legs was recovered from the bed of the harbour in the same locality. Police inquiries soon established the identity of these human remains as being those of a middle-aged married man who was a resident of Wellington. Urgent inquiries in the Wellington and Nelson Districts definitely connected the deceased's son with the crime, and on the 10th May, 1938, a warrant was obtained for his arrest on a charge of murder. The same morning the Auckland police effected his arrest. On the 23rd July, 1938, following a lengthy trial at the Wellington Supreme Court, the accused was found guilty of manslaughter, and received a sentence of ten years' hard labour.

The conduct of members of the Force in the district has been good, breaches of the regulations dealt with being of a minor nature only.