

A man was charged with murder, convicted and sentenced to death, the sentence being subsequently commuted to one of life imprisonment. The short facts were that the man had been engaged to marry a young woman, and her mother resented the engagement, which was broken off. Following this, the man, on the night of 14th April, 1938, entered the mother's bedroom and killed her by blows on the head with a 7 lb. hammer.

A woman was charged with murder of her husband, and the jury found her guilty of manslaughter, and she received a sentence of eighteen months' reformatory detention. In this case the husband had neglected his wife for other women, and on 12th December, 1938, following an argument, she attacked her husband, who was in bed, with a tomahawk, and inflicted injuries from which he died.

The general conduct of the police during the year has been satisfactory, all members taking a keen interest in their duties, which have been well performed, the duties of the Detective Branch being particularly well carried out. Five constables were dealt with during the year for breaches of the regulations, and fines inflicted in each case.

INSPECTOR GIBSON, INVERCARGILL DISTRICT.

The strength of the Force in this district on 31st March, 1939, totalled fifty-three, an increase of 1 sergeant, caused by the placing of a sergeant in charge of Bluff Police-station.

I again recommend an increase of one constable at Gore, this being essential to provide efficiency, especially for relieving duties at Gore and out-stations attached to Gore sub-district.

The offences return for the year ended 31st December, 1938, disclosed a total of 1,108 offences reported, this being a decrease of 6 compared with the previous year. The principal decreases were in theft, assault, and drunkenness. The principal increases were being found unlawfully on licensed premises, breaking, entering, and theft, and false pretences.

There has been no serious crime during the year.

The conduct of some of the police has been only fair, it having been necessary to severely deal with three members for breaches of the Police Regulations.

There are still large numbers of men engaged by the Public Works Department at the Hollyford Valley, Milford Sound, and Haast Pass. This considerably increases the work of and entails long journeys by the constables stationed at Lumsden and Pembroke.
