

reported, 145; increase, 52: disobeying orders of Court, offences reported, 124; increase, 82: disorderly and riotous conduct while drunk, 90; increase, 44: drunkenness, 1,091; increase, 121: failing to support parents, offences reported, 70; increase, 32: obstructing and resisting police, 42; increase, 19.

On the 14th September last information reached the Kaiapoi police that the dead body of a man was found at Ohoka, and upon the police reaching the place they found the skeleton of a man, probably about a year dead. At an inquest held upon the remains a verdict of "Wilful murder" was returned against some person or persons unknown, and the Government offered a reward of £250 for the arrest of the offender. Beside the remains of the murdered man a swag was found containing such articles as are usually carried by swagsmen. Every possible effort has been made to elucidate the mystery surrounding the case, but so far without success.

No other case of crime requiring special mention occurred here during the year.

In my last annual report I urged the necessity of having second-hand dealers in clothing, &c., licensed. I think it necessary to refer to the matter again. Pawnbrokers are licensed, and have to keep books, which are open to the police at all times for inspection. There is an equal need for licensing second-hand dealers. Many of them are well-known receivers of stolen property, and, owing to their being under no legal supervision, and not compelled to keep books and account to the police for all property coming into their hands, have special advantages for disposing of stolen property. I may state that the number of second-hand dealers is steadily increasing.

The establishment of the Samaritan Home has relieved the town of a large number of drunken old women who paraded the streets at night, and were usually found by the police sleeping upon door-steps, or in deserted houses, or in water-closets. When brought before the Bench for vagrancy they always complained that they had no place to go to and no one to relieve them. This they can no longer do: they are mostly to be found in the Home now, and it is to be hoped the streets will know them no more.

Considerable difficulty has been occasioned of late in the enforcement of the by-laws with regard to bicyclists riding upon footpaths, or without lights at night, and the drivers of vehicles driving over street-crossings at other than a walking pace. In a large proportion of cases it is found that the offending parties give false names and addresses to constables, and thus escape punishment. If the difficulty continues to increase it will be necessary to give the police increased powers, so that they could arrest in all cases where the offender is unknown to the police and his address cannot be ascertained.

The police buildings of the district are in a better state of repair than they have been for many years. A temporary station, to be opened only during the summer months, was established at Summer in the month of November.

Owing to the long hours of night duty, constables are frequently on the sick-list, and, small as their pay is, it is considerably diminished in the payment of medical bills. Formerly a medical man was employed to attend upon the police, but this was changed some years ago; and now in every instance, except where a constable actually receives an injury while making an arrest, he has to pay for medical attendance. I think it will be found that this is the only colony where the police pay for medical attendance.

Police uniform was also supplied free to the police of Canterbury in provincial days. I am given to understand that railway-servants, letter-carriers, and gaol-warders receive their uniforms now free. It would be a valuable concession to the police if the old system were again reverted to, and they again received a free issue of uniform.

#### INSPECTOR W. S. PARDY, DUNEDIN, SOUTHLAND, AND LAKES.

In compliance with your circular of the 2nd April, I have the honour to submit for your information my annual report on the state of the police in this district:—

The numerical strength of the district is 110, made up as follows: One Inspector, thirteen sergeants, ninety-three constables, and three detectives; and, in addition thereto, one district constable stationed at Stewart Island.

The Offences Return for the year ended the 31st December, 1896, which has already been forwarded to your office, shows a total increase in all offences reported on the previous year of 209. In some cases there have been increases, while in some other cases there have been decreases. The principal increases are: Arson, 4; assaults, common, 11; breaches of the peace, 24; deserting and failing to provide for wives and families, 24; disorderly conduct, 19; drunkenness, 47; malicious injury to property, 20; obscene and profane language, 12; thefts undescribed, 174; vagrancy, 17. The principal decreases are burglary and housebreaking, 20; embezzlement, 11; keeping disorderly houses, 12; lunacy, 37; murder, 3; rape, attempted, 5; sly-grog selling, 6; suicide, attempted, 4; thefts from dwellings, 50; and thefts from persons, 17.

The casualties in the Force in this district during the past year have been one sergeant and three constables retired on medical grounds, one constable dismissed, and five constables punished for minor offences. With these exceptions the conduct of the police of all ranks in this district has been very good, and with few exceptions they have been energetic and attentive to their various duties, especially in the detection and prevention of crime.

Every effort has been made to enforce the Infant Life Protection Act, and a large number of houses registered, and now that a matron has been appointed to this district a strict supervision is being kept over them.

A number of the police buildings throughout the district require repairs and additions to improve their appearance and preserve them from further deteriorating, a return of which, with the probable cost, has been forwarded to your office for consideration.