

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

INSPECTOR FOX, WHANGAREI DISTRICT.

The total of all ranks as at 31st March was forty, an increase of one constable since last annual report.

Kaikohe Town is well served now with the two constables stationed there, but it is an important and growing centre and should be the headquarters of a sergeant, who could exercise supervision over Kaikohe, Rawene, Ohacawai, and Kawakawa, and conduct the Court cases brought through those stations. The Court work is considerable.

A station was opened in August last at Kohukohu, on the northern side of Hokianga Harbour.

The total number of offences reported during the year was 1,577, as against 1,571 during the previous year, an increase of 6 only. Arrests or summonses resulted in respect of 1,489 offences, leaving 88 in which no action resulted. Increases or decreases in particular breaches do not appear to call for comment, except, perhaps, as to thefts. There were 359 last year, as compared with 296 the previous year, an increase of 63. I can advance no specific reason for this increase.

Two men were charged with serious crimes during the year; one with manslaughter, another with attempted murder and manslaughter.

Regarding the first, accused assaulted his nephew, a boy of thirteen years, in a milking-shed by striking him on the head with a piece of steel, the resultant injury causing the boy's death. On a charge of manslaughter, accused was acquitted at the Supreme Court, the evidence tending to show an intention to strike the boy on the shoulder.

The second accused referred to, following a domestic dispute, took unlawful possession of a motor-car, driving it at a fearful speed back and forth on the roadway. The car collided with another, killing the woman occupant. He was sentenced to four years' imprisonment on a charge of manslaughter. He was acquitted on a charge of attempted murder of his son, a boy of four, whom he had taken in the car with him.

The general conduct of the police during the year was very good. No breaches of regulations by them came under notice.

SUPERINTENDENT CUMMINGS, AUCKLAND DISTRICT.

On 31st March, 1940, the actual strength of the Force of all ranks was 310.

I recommend an increase of twenty constables for the Central Station, and three sergeants—One for Mount Albert, one for Mount Eden, and one for Papakura.

The increase would enable all the necessary relieving duty to be carried out, and generally enable all requirements to be met adequately and efficiently.

The Criminal Registration Branch rendered valuable assistance during the year.

Thames South Police-station was closed on 18th April, 1939.

A new modern station is urgently required at Auckland Central, and police residences at Howick, Surfdale, and Whitianga. Several of the stations in the district have been renovated during this year, some are at present being renovated, while a few others require it.

An additional constable was appointed to Pukekohe and Thames.

The offences return for the year ended 31st December, 1939, shows a total of 12,043, as compared with 12,328 for the previous year, a decrease of 285. Of the total number reported, 11,058 were accounted for by arrest or summonses.

The principal increases were in thefts, attempted thefts, obtaining credit by fraud, burglary, house and shop breaking, receiving stolen property, mischief, breach of the peace, drunkenness, indecent acts, vagrancy, unlawful use of motor-cars, stealing postal packets, damage to Post Office pillar-boxes, selling and exposing liquor for sale, found on licensed premises after hours, Natives illegally dealing in liquor, failing to comply with the terms of release under the First Offenders' Probation Act, and reckless or negligent driving.

The following showed a decrease: False declarations, attempted suicide, assaults, theft from dwellings, theft by servants, false pretences, using profane and indecent language, damaging telegraph equipment, and offences under the Destitute Persons Act.

The following major crimes occurred during the period under review:—

(1) During the early part of 1939 a number of cases of assaulting women, who were in bed at the time of the occurrence, were brought under the notice of the police. A special watch was kept, and on 17th April, 1939, a constable detected the offender in the grounds of a private hospital, and when in the act of apprehending the offender the constable was violently assaulted. Some days later the offender was arrested, and sentenced to a total of six years' hard labour and declared an habitual criminal.

(2) Early on the morning of the 6th November, 1939, a man and a woman were found in a state of collapse in a local hotel. After inquiries it was ascertained that the man had attempted to murder the woman and had then attempted suicide. There appears little doubt that the man's wife had previously committed suicide, knowing that her husband was leaving home with another woman. The man was sentenced to two years' reformative detention.

(3) On the morning of 21st December, 1939, a restaurant-keeper was discovered allegedly unconscious at Huntly, and when revived stated that he had been assaulted by three men. After removal to a hospital, he eventually admitted that his story was bogus, but he later received a sentence of two years' imprisonment for carnal knowledge and was also convicted of making a false statement to the police.