

Lectures and instruction in relation to firearms were given on all possible occasions to police in various districts, and practical target shooting was also supervised.

The firearms accident rate is still very high. These accidents are due largely to preventable causes. In an attempt to widen public knowledge of the hidden dangers in three of the main classes of these weapons the National Film Unit recorded a film under the supervision of the Arms Bureau. This film showed examples of accidents and how to avoid them. It was shown in all picture-theatres in New Zealand, and one copy was sent to the Forces in Japan.

Fifty-seven accidents were reported, of which 13 were fatal. The average age of the persons injured was $23\frac{1}{2}$ years.

The majority of the accidents were caused by shot-guns with exposed hammers and .22 rifles.

Work for other Government Departments.—As in the past, the Police Department has been called on by various Government Departments to carry out a large volume of inquiry and other work, and a good deal of the time of the police is taken up with these duties.

During the year inquiries were completed and prosecutions were conducted for breaches of statutes and regulations administered by other Departments.

Criminal Statistics.—The criminal statistics (Appendix A) deal with offences reported to the police during the year ended 31st December last and show an aggregate net increase of 272 on the figures of 1945. The percentage of offences to the population was 1.92, as against 1.97 the previous year.

The number of offences reported during the year was 34,016, the number of cases in which arrests or summonses resulted was 28,818, leaving 5,198 cases in which no prosecution followed but which are still the subject of inquiries or have since been disposed of.

The percentage of arrests or summonses resulting from offences reported during the year 1946 was 84.72, the figures of the preceding year being 82.87.

There was an increase in the number of serious crimes as compared with the previous year and in the number of indecent and sexual offences. There has also been an increase in the number of cases of false pretences and obtaining credit by fraud. There has been, however, a decrease in respect of the unlawful conversion of motor-vehicles of approximately 12 per cent.

There were 10 cases of murder, 5 of attempted murder, and 3 of manslaughter. In 1 case of murder the offender committed suicide after committing the crime; in 2 cases the offender was found to be mentally defective, in 1 case the offender was acquitted, and in 5 cases convictions were recorded. In 1 case the offender has not been traced—that of a man found apparently murdered at Wellington.

Prosecutions in connection with liquor at dances show an increase of nearly 44 per cent. The police are making every effort to combat this class of offence.

Drunkenness.—There was an increase of 215 in the number of prosecutions for drunkenness during the year as compared with the previous year.

The number charged with drunkenness in 1946 was 2,069 (2,018 males and 51 females), whereas in 1945 the number was 1,854 (1,759 males and 95 females).

Four hundred and sixty-two males (22.9 per cent.) and 9 females (17.65 per cent.) had previous convictions recorded against them, and 6.24 per cent. of the males were not permanent residents of the Dominion.

Prosecutions against Hotelkeepers.—Prosecutions against hotelkeepers during the year show an increase of 34. There were 402 prosecutions resulting in 300 convictions during 1946, as against 368 prosecutions and 257 convictions in 1945.