

SLY-GROG.

There were 188 prosecutions during the year for sly-grog selling, resulting in 115 convictions, against 169 prosecutions and 113 convictions during the preceding year.

Although the Department continues to adopt special tactics to bring sly-grog sellers to justice, the offence is still persisted in and carried on with greater secrecy. I am of opinion that if more severe punishments were inflicted when convictions are recorded they would have a deterrent effect. The work of detection is disagreeable and demoralising, but with one or two exceptions it has been carried out by members of the Force, and has resulted most satisfactorily both as regards the number of prosecutions and the reduction in expenditure (£638 9s. 10d.).

The fines imposed on sly-grog sellers during the year 1905 amounted to £1,103 10s., against £1,584 in 1904.

The amounts of fines in the various districts are as follows:—

	£	s.	d.
Auckland	319	10	0
Napier	2	0	0
Wanganui	83	0	0
Wellington	67	0	0
Greymouth	75	0	0
Christchurch	187	0	0
Dunedin	320	0	0
Invercargill	50	0	0
Total	£1,103	10	0

The direct cost to the colony in detecting and prosecuting sly-grog sellers during the year was £727 9s. 9d., this being £376 0s. 3d. less than the amount of fines imposed.

GAMING OFFENCES.

There were 180 prosecutions, resulting in 162 convictions, during the year under the gaming laws, against 115 prosecutions and 91 convictions in 1904.

If it is intended to minimise gambling in the direction of playing "two-up" in private places (which is carried on to a considerable extent, and frequent complaints are received concerning it) to prevent "Totalisator advertisements" appearing in the Press (which probably is an inducement for persons to bet), or to reduce the number of Tattersall's agents who collect lottery subscriptions in this colony, it will be necessary to amend "The Gaming and Lotteries Act, 1881," accordingly.

"THE INFANT LIFE PROTECTION ACT, 1896."

During the year there were 557 registered homes throughout the colony, representing 862 infants, against 528 homes and 728 infants in 1904.

Twenty deaths occurred in the homes during the year, against 21 in the preceding year. Four licensees were prosecuted for breaches of the Act, and three were convicted, against 5 prosecutions and 5 convictions in 1904. No licenses were cancelled, and no neglect of licensees was disclosed at inquests.

CONDUCT OF MEMBERS OF THE FORCE.

During 1905 15 men were punished for being under the influence of liquor, 7 of whom were dismissed or called upon to resign, and the remainder severely punished either by fine or reduction; 2 were fined for drinking whilst on duty, and 2 for entering hotels while on duty and not reporting same; otherwise the conduct of the men has been good and the efficiency of the force well maintained.

FINGER-PRINT BRANCH.

On the 31st March last the finger-print collection consisted of the impressions of 5,000 offenders.

During the year 88 persons, claiming to be first offenders, were by means of their finger prints identified as previously convicted persons.

Finger prints of unidentified prisoners—that is, of persons whose antecedents were unknown to the police, have been identified, during the year at London, Johannesburg, Perth, Adelaide, Melbourne, Hobart, Sydney, and Brisbane.

In comparing the number of identifications here with those in other colonies, attention has to be directed to the fact that the mere finding of corresponding prints in the finger-print cabinet is not recorded as an identification unless the police are ignorant of the man's identity. The finger-print officers in other colonies usually hold the finding of corresponding prints to be an identification regardless of the fact that perhaps the police were thoroughly conversant with the prisoner's whole history.

At the beginning of the year the special attention of the police was directed to the necessity of careful search being made for finger impressions in all cases where such evidence could possibly be found, as in cases of burglary, housebreaking, &c., and an expert from the Finger-print Branch visited all the principal police-stations in the colony, explaining and showing the importance of the system, with the result that during the year 35 finger-marked articles were submitted to the branch for identification. Of these many were too indistinct to be of any value, but 6 of these impressions were found identical with those of persons previously convicted, whose finger prints were filed in the Finger-print Branch. Two of these occurred in Dunedin, 1 at Blenheim, 1 at Auckland, and 2 at Wellington. All 6 persons were arrested and charged, 5 were convicted, the sixth being able to prove that his finger print had been impressed on the glass of window in a legitimate manner was discharged.