

it would be utterly impossible for a person who was not well known to purchase liquor. A large number of prosecutions for this offence have taken place during the year, and substantial penalties have been inflicted which, no doubt, will have a deterrent effect. The business is therefore neither pleasant nor profitable to those who embark in it.

Licensed hotels, particularly in the city, have been conducted in a most satisfactory manner during the year. There has, however, been a few instances where the conduct of some of the country hotels has not been so good; prosecutions have in such cases ensued, and although convictions did not follow in every case the effect has been satisfactory.

The conduct of private billiard-rooms has been satisfactory during the year, the provisions of "The Police Offences Amendment Act, 1903," regulating the hours of closing, &c., having been found to work well.

On the 31st March last the strength of the Force was 93 of all ranks. The total is made up as follows: Inspector, 1; sub-inspector, 1; station sergeant, 1; sergeants, 10; constables, 78; detectives, 2. In addition to the above there were: Police surgeon, 1; matron, 1; and district constable, 1. One station was closed during the year—viz., Chatto Creek. This was owing to the railway works in course of construction in that part of the district approaching completion; the constable from this station was added to the strength at Alexandra.

The casualties have been: Retired under Police Provident Fund Act, 1; resigned, 13; dismissed, 5; deceased, 1. The majority of those who resigned were men who were found to be unfit for the service, and were called upon to tender their resignations.

The conduct of the sergeants, constables, and detectives now remaining in the Force here has, with a few trivial exceptions, been very good. The granting of house allowance to married constables after twelve months' service and the more liberal scale of uniform material has been much appreciated, and has added to the contentment of the men.

The appointment of a station sergeant has filled a long-felt want, and the appointment of an additional sergeant now permits of two sergeants being placed in charge of the night-duty section. This arrangement insures additional supervision which, under hitherto existing circumstances, was impossible.

The Infant Life Protection Act continues to perform its function in a satisfactory manner. Inspection of the infant homes has invariably disclosed the fact that the children maintained therein are properly fed, clad, clean and healthy. Very few deaths have been recorded, and the only prosecutions under the Act were for receiving children without being duly licensed to do so.

The common betting-house is not now so much in evidence as hitherto; laying totalisator odds is still indulged in by a few bookmakers, but not to any great extent. The difficulty in the detection of this class of offence is that the other party to the bet may decline to give evidence on the grounds that such evidence would tend to incriminate himself. It seems to me that the law in this respect should be amended so as to compel all parties concerned in the transaction to give evidence. The Chinese game known as "pa-ka-poo" received a considerable check on the conviction here of a Chinaman who was fined £100 for the sale of a ticket giving an interest in such a lottery. There is, however, another form of gambling which seems to infatuate a large section of the community—namely, "two-up," which consists of the tossing of two coins in the air and wagering as to whether they will be "heads" or "tails" on reaching the ground. This game is usually played on Sundays and holidays on private lands in some secluded place; and, as it must be shown before a conviction can ensue that the game was played in a public place, those taking part in such games escape conviction. I would suggest that the playing of such a game be made an offence wheresoever played.

#### INSPECTOR A. J. MITCHELL, INVERCARGILL DISTRICT.

The casualties during the year have been one constable died and two resigned.

The conduct of members still in the Force has been good; they have been attentive to their duties, with the result that 93 per cent. of crime in this district has been detected.

A case of wife-murder was dealt with last June, the accused being found guilty and sentenced to death; afterwards commuted to imprisonment for life.

The hotels in this district have, as a whole, been well conducted during the past year. There have been no prosecutions against licensees, and a decrease of 71 in the number of cases of drunkenness as compared with the previous year.