

The fines imposed on sly-grog sellers during the year 1909 amounted to £2,358 15s., as against £1,749 15s. in 1908.

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

	£	s.	d.
Auckland	529	15	0
Thames	620	0	0
Napier	69	0	0
Wanganui	72	0	0
Wellington	518	0	0
Greymouth
Christchurch	242	0	0
Dunedin	205	0	0
Invercargill	103	0	0
Total	£2,358	15	0

The direct cost to the Dominion in detecting and prosecuting sly-grog sellers during the year was £1,090 19s. 6d., this being £1,267 15s. 6d. less than the amount of fines imposed.

GAMING OFFENCES.

There were 239 prosecutions, resulting in 208 convictions, during the year under the gaming laws, against 213 prosecutions and 184 convictions in 1908.

The question of licensing bookmakers will have to be very seriously considered, and some restriction be placed upon the many undesirable characters who under the present law follow the profession of bookmaking.

FINGER-PRINT BRANCH.

On the 31st March last the finger-print collection consisted of the impressions of 9,919 offenders, being an increase of 1,201 on the previous year.

During the year 140 offenders, whose antecedents were unknown to the police of the districts in which they were in custody, were, by means of their finger-impressions, identified as previously convicted persons, showing an increase of two over last year.

The following table shows increase of the finger-print collection, and prisoners traced thereby for the past six years.

Year.	Number of Prints in Collection.	Increase on Previous Year.	Prisoners traced as Previous Offenders.
1905	4,200	700	72
1906	5,000	800	88
1907	6,151	1,151	104
1908	7,622	1,471	123
1909	8,718	1,096	138
1910	9,919	1,201	140

Finger-prints of persons in custody here have been identified in each of the Australian States, in Cape Town, London, and Denmark as those of persons previously convicted in those places, while prints of persons in custody in the various States of Australia and South Africa have been identified here as those of persons previously convicted in New Zealand.

Of forty-seven finger-marked articles taken possession of by police in the investigation of various offences eleven prosecutions resulted, convictions being recorded in all cases.

As an instance of the practical assistance the branch is to the general police, a series of burglaries took place in Wellington during the latter part of last year, and from finger-prints left behind by the offenders it was clearly demonstrated that the same persons were responsible for the whole of the burglaries, thus narrowing the scope of the inquiry. The offenders were subsequently arrested and convicted.

The photographic portion of the branch is still working well, during the year 628 photographs being finished, at an average price of just under 2d. each.

CANDIDATES FOR FORCE.

Sixty-seven men were taken on during the year, their nationalities, religions, and occupations being as follows:—Nationalities: Australia, 8; England, 6; India, 1; Ireland, 5; New Zealand, 41; Scotland, 5; West Indies, 1. Religions: Baptist, 1; Church of England, 25; Methodists, 3; Presbyterians, 20; Roman Catholics, 15; Wesleyans, 3. Occupations: Artillerymen, 3; bakers, 2;