

INSPECTOR WRIGHT, HAMILTON DISTRICT.

I beg to submit the following report upon the Hamilton District:—

The authorized strength on the 31st March, 1915, was 1 Inspector, 2 senior sergeants, 5 sergeants, 55 constables, 1 detective-sergeant, 2 district constables, and 3 Native constables. During the year the strength has been increased by 1 constable, owing to a new station being opened at Matiere.

Further additions to the strength are now or will be required during the year, viz.: 1 detective and 1 constable at Hamilton, and 1 constable each at Frankton Junction, Ngaruawahia, Rotorua, Ohura, Putaruru, and Taumarunui.

At Hamilton a detective is very badly needed, and there is plenty of detective work to keep him fully occupied in that part of the district. When the new station is completed at Hamilton, which will be within the next three months, it will be necessary to employ a constable continuously in the watch-house and to assist in the office, and as the present staff have their hands full another constable will be required.

A second constable is required at Frankton, so that the mail-trains can be met at night, and the borough get more attention than at present.

At Ngaruawahia the work is getting too heavy for one constable. The Waipa Collieries, six miles distant, are now in full work, some two hundred men being employed, and the number will steadily increase as the mine is developed. The constable has a large district to look after, and with the collieries to visit frequently is away from Ngaruawahia more than is desirable.

At Rotorua another constable is required to enable a proper system of night duty to be performed, which cannot be done with the present strength.

With regard to Ohura, the work on the Okahukura Tunnel having been delayed, it will be some time before the line is formed to Ohura, and there will be no need to station a man there until the work is approaching that end. It will not entail any increase to the present strength, as the Matiere Station can then be closed.

At Putaruru a constable is needed, and provision should be made for one as soon as possible. The Totara Timber Company's line has not been extended to Taupo, but it no doubt soon will be; but, apart from that, a constable is now necessary there, and will have plenty to do.

At Taumarunui the place is growing so rapidly, and the sly-grog supervision takes up so much time, that another constable could be profitably employed there.

A new station was formed at Matiere in July last, owing to the proximity of railway-works on the Stratford-Okahukura line.

New and up-to-date police buildings have been erected at Ngaruawahia and Raurimu during the year, and a temporary office and lock-up at Matiere. New quarters are also under construction at Hamilton. The old post-office at Opotiki has been converted into comfortable quarters for the constable there.

There have been no casualties during the year beyond the resignation of one Native constable, who was replaced by another at Te Kaha.

The offences return for 1914 shows that 1,992 offences were reported, as compared with 1,707 the previous year, a net increase of 285. Increases appear under the following heads: Housebreaking, &c., 18; disorderly conduct, 11; drunkenness, 80; failing to provide for families, 49; forgery, 15; sly-grog selling, 26; theft, 47; trespass, 28; vagrancy, 27. Decreases appear under heads—Obscene language, 12; breaches of the peace, 17; cruelty to animals, 12; mischief, 10; receiving stolen goods, 7.

These fluctuations are usually experienced and have no significance. Although there has been an increase of 18 cases of housebreaking last year, there was a decrease of 22 the previous year.

Sly-grog selling is, I regret to say, still giving the police a lot of trouble, and in spite of their strenuous efforts and the heavy fines inflicted offenders continue to take the risk for the large profits they make. During the year the sum of £1,157 10s. was inflicted in fines, of which £950 was imposed in the King-country. Last year the total was only £536. The police are using every means within their power to check this evil, but so long as people are willing to pay 12s. 6d. per bottle for what is worth 4s. to 5s. so long will there be sellers. The police get no assistance from either side.

Of the total number of offences reported (1,992), 1,925, or 97 per cent., were accounted for either by arrest or summons.

Of the 85 persons committed for trial 68 were subsequently convicted.

The conduct of all members of the Force during the year has been excellent. They have performed their duties zealously and with discretion, and in no part of the district has there been the slightest friction either among themselves or with the public.

I think that the provisions of sections 8 and 9 of the Licensing Amendment Act, 1914, should be made to apply to both no-license and proclaimed areas. Why there should be any distinction is not apparent. As the law now stands it only leads to confusion.

INSPECTOR MCGRATH, NAPIER DISTRICT.

I beg to submit my annual report on the Napier Police District for the year ending the 31st March 1915.

On the 31st March last the authorized strength of the district was 63 of all ranks, being an increase of 5 during the year. The total is made up as follows: 1 Inspector, 1 Sub-Inspector, 1 senior sergeant, 4 sergeants, 48 constables, 1 detective-sergeant, 2 detectives, 4 district constables, and 1 Native constable.