

devolved upon both branches in connection with military matters, all the work has been very satisfactorily performed.

I would suggest that it be made an offence for any person to use a horse or vehicle without the permission of the owner, as a good deal of annoyance and inconvenience is caused from time to time by persons taking motor-cars, bicycles, and occasionally horses, and using them without such permission. The circumstances attending such cases generally leave it doubtful whether the persons intend to steal or merely temporarily use the animal or vehicle. For many years unlawfully using horses has been an offence punishable by six months' imprisonment in New South Wales and Victoria, and the conditions which rendered the passing of this law necessary in those States were the same in effect as those now existing in this Dominion, especially in regard to motor-cars and bicycles.

#### INSPECTOR HENDREY, WANGANUI DISTRICT.

The authorized strength of the district is 1 Inspector, 2 Sub-Inspectors, 2 senior sergeants, 7 sergeants, 2 detective-sergeants, and 73 constables, a total of 87 of all ranks. We are at present working 4 constables under strength—2 at Palmerston North, 1 at Feilding, and 1 at New Plymouth. These men are badly required to man the stations named, and provision will require to be made for a constable at Halcombe as soon as the freezing-works at Kakariki are completed.

During the year there occurred—Death, 1 constable; voluntary resignations, 3 constables; compulsory resignation, 1 constable; retirements on superannuation, 1 Superintendent, 1 senior sergeant, 1 detective-sergeant, and 3 constables.

The offences return for year 1917 shows that a total of 2,284 offences were reported, of which 2,146 were detected and dealt with; this shows a decrease of 92 on the number of offences reported during the preceding year. The principal increases were as follows: Bankruptcy offences, 14; false pretences, 9; furious riding and driving, 18; malicious injury to property, 13; attempted murder, 6; obstructing and resisting police, 13; sly-grog selling, 37; theft of cattle and horses, 11. The principal decreases are in burglary, breaking and entering, &c., 13; drunkenness, 151; theft by servants, 14; thefts from dwellings, 17; vagrancy offences, 40. The decrease in drunkenness is probably due to the War Regulations prohibiting treating and to the recent licensing legislation closing hotels at 6 p.m. I anticipate a marked decrease of drunkenness during the current year from these causes.

I regret to have to report that two serious crimes of murder have been committed during the past twelve months. In one case a man killed his wife and attempted to kill five other persons, whom he seriously wounded; the offender was convicted and executed. In the other case the accused was convicted of manslaughter and sentenced to a long term of imprisonment. Both of these crimes were due to excessive drinking.

Sly-grog selling still continues in the Raetihi and Ohakune districts, and at Mokau and Awakino. The police have, however, been very successful in dealing with this class of offence, and during the twelve months fines amounting to £508 have been imposed.

The conduct of all ranks during the year has been very good. The work of the police has largely increased owing to what one might briefly term "war work," and all ranks have been doing their best cheerfully to cope with the increased work.

During the month of March last disastrous bush-fires were responsible for a vast destruction of property and stock in the Waimarino district, and I regret that during these fires three persons lost their lives. The police-station at Raetihi was completely destroyed by fire at this time.

#### SUPERINTENDENT NORWOOD, WELLINGTON DISTRICT.

The strength of Force in this district on the 31st March last was 1 Superintendent, 1 Inspector, 1 Sub-Inspector, 6 senior sergeants, 15 sergeants, 126 permanent constables, 11 temporary constables, 1 Chief Detective, 5 detective-sergeants, 3 detectives. There was a shortage of 1 detective and 4 constables.

The stations at Mangatainoka and Mahakipawa have been closed.

In addition to the recommendations already made for the purchase of sites for police-stations at Lower Hutt, Seatoun, Kelburn, and Blenheim, I beg to recommend that the Department should secure sites at Upper Hutt, Seddon, and Levin. At the first-named place the present building cannot last much longer and a new site will be necessary; at the other places named the Department is renting premises and has no site to build on. Quarters for the senior sergeant in charge of the Mount Cook Station are also badly required; at present he lives in expensive rented premises some considerable distance from the police-station. There is a vacant section, belonging to the Government, adjoining the station, on which the building could be erected. New police-stations are also badly required at Greytown, Upper Hutt, Lower Hutt, and Eketahuna.

During the year there were—Death, 1 constable; retirements on pension, 3 constables; discharged as medically unfit, 1 constable; resignations, 1 sergeant, 5 permanent constables, 5 temporary constables, and 1 district constable; dismissed, 2 constables.

The total number of offences reported for the year 1917 was 5,304; dealt with by Courts, 5,037; undetected or abandoned through insufficient evidence, 267. The indictable cases dealt with in the Supreme Court were 173 in number. There was a decrease in the number of offences reported during the past year of 958 cases as compared with the previous year. Increases appear under the following heads: Deserting from ships, 21; forgery and uttering, 16; fortune-telling, 13; obstructing and resisting police, 15; soliciting prostitution, 13. Decreases: Common assaults, 26; breaches of the peace, 24; burglary, 17; drunkenness, 556;