

INSPECTOR HUTTON, NEW PLYMOUTH DISTRICT.

The New Plymouth Police District was formed on the 1st January, 1921, and placed under my charge, and consists of 14 stations.

The actual strength on the 31st March, 1921, was 1 Inspector, 1 Senior Sergeant, 1 Detective Sergeant, 2 sergeants, and 22 constables, which was 1 constable below the authorized strength—viz., 1 at New Plymouth. The authorized strength of the district has been increased by the appointment of a district and an assistant clerk.

A new station is very badly wanted at Moturoa and the Breakwater, to cope with the compliants on the wharf and shipping and about larrikins in that district. It is approximately two and a half miles from the main station, and when a constable is required the only constable on duty in the street has to be sent.

Two additional constables are necessary at New Plymouth, to allow of another constable for night duty, and one as a reserve in case of leave, and sickness in the district. Two additional constables are required at Hawera. The town is growing considerably, and at present police patrol ceases at 1 a.m. A continuous service, owing to the growth of this town and population, is necessary. One additional constable is required at Stratford to permit of a continuous service in that town, owing to its expansion. At the present time, owing to the numerous duties thrown on the police and the wants of local bodies and committees, there are insufficient men at times in the district to cope with the requirements, even when all the men are available for duty. Single men could be provided for at New Plymouth, but at Moturoa, Hawera, and Stratford the lack of house accommodation is a factor that will have to be taken into consideration.

The conduct of the police has been good. One constable was fined for breach of Police Regulations, and another resigned to go farming.

The offences for the year are accounted for and included in the Wanganui District annual report. There was no serious crime calling for special mention.

INSPECTOR FOUHY, WANGANUI DISTRICT.

Since last annual report five King-country stations from Hamilton District were added to this district, fourteen Taranaki stations were cut off and now constitute the New Plymouth District.

The authorized strength of the Wanganui District at present is 37.

At least two extra constables are required at Wanganui, and one each at Taihape and Ohakune. These are the least numbers required, and should be supplied at the earliest convenience. In each case the increase of population is the cause of the request.

A new station should be formed at Castlecliff, on account of the increase of population.

The station at Matiere should be removed to Ohura, which is a more central and progressive place, and where the Department has a section in a convenient locality. Matiere is only a single man's station at present, and the building there is of little value.

The total number of offences reported during the year ended 31st December, 1920, was 1,748, as against 1,624 for the year 1919. There were increases in the following offences: Theft (undescribed), 57; theft from dwelling, 7; burglary, 6; burglary (attempted), 9; housebreaking (attempted), 12; breaches of peace, 22; drunkenness, 40; unlawfully using vehicles, 15; found in common gaming-houses, 33; unlawful betting, 19; breaches of prohibition order, 42. There have been decreases in the following offences: False pretences, 19; vagrancy, 11; gaming with instruments, 40; stealing postal packets, 15; failing to maintain, 14; ship-desertion, 10; selling liquor at unauthorized times, 31.

The conduct of all members of the force has been satisfactory, with the exception of four breaches of the Police Regulations. During the year there was one death, two resignations, and one dismissal.

The most serious crimes committed during the year were two cases of attempted murder, both of a very determined character. One professional man invited another man to his office and there fired several shots from an automatic pistol, one only of which took effect. The other was the case of a man who attempted to cut his wife's throat. Both offenders were sentenced to long terms of imprisonment.

There are still complaints of sly-grog selling in the King-country, but the police stationed there are doing their best to suppress it—with a fair amount of success.

INSPECTOR MCKINNON, PALMERSTON NORTH.

The strength of the Force in the Palmerston North District on the 31st March, 1921, numbered 41, and included 1 Inspector, 2 Senior Sergeants (1 of whom was under orders to transfer), 1 sergeant, 1 detective-sergeant, 1 detective, 33 constables, and 2 temporary constables.

An additional constable is required for beat duty at Feilding. At Shannon, where important public works are in progress, the strength requires to be increased by one constable also. Four additional constables—one for plain clothes and three for beat duty—are required at Palmerston North.

During the year two motor-cycles were provided by the Department for use of the police at Palmerston North and Feilding respectively. The troop-horse at Palmerston North was disposed of. The motor-cycles have proved a great success, and are a real help in expediting inquiry work in the country districts; they have to a large extent counterbalanced the difficulties attendant on the shortage of men, and are proving a valuable factor in promoting efficiency, and greatly assist in facilitating the work of the Department.