

obtained under the 1920 Act, the police had to fall back upon the 1908 Act and prosecute for keeping common gaming-houses. This has been done with considerable success.

Housing.—The necessity for more houses being provided for married members of the Force so as to facilitate necessary transfers economically has not been lost sight of, but the high price of property, coupled with the scarcity of money, has seriously curtailed operations.

Motors.—Police horses are gradually being replaced by motor cycles and cars wherever the roads are suitable. This not only reduces claims for travelling-expenses, but enables the subdistricts to be patrolled at more frequent intervals, and obviates the necessity for constables being away from stations at night. The judicious use of motors undoubtedly tends to economy and efficiency.

Promotions.—The promotions during the year have been—Superintendent Wright to be Commissioner; Inspector Sheehan to be Superintendent; Sub-Inspectors Eales, Murray, and Willis to be Inspectors; Senior Sergeants McNamara, Simpson, Till, and Eccles to be Sub-Inspectors. Five sergeants were promoted to the rank of senior sergeant, sixteen constables to the rank of sergeant, and two detective-sergeants to the rank of senior detective.

Serious Crimes.—During the past year 1,070 crimes of a serious nature were reported, as compared with 879 in the previous year, an increase of 191. The increase is accounted for under the headings of—Burglary, breaking into shops, dwellings, &c., 144; forgery, 20; receiving, 33; and rape, 8. There were decreases under the headings of—Murder, 3; attempted murder, 4; and robbery, 11. An unusually large number of charges of breaking and entering against individual offenders occurred during the year, so that the considerable increase under that heading is not as serious as it would otherwise appear.

Two of the ten murders that occurred during the year were, unfortunately, not followed by the arrest of the offenders—I refer to the case of a young man who was found dead at Grey Lynn and who had evidently been battered to death with a piling, and to that of Constable Dorgan, of Timaru, who was shot by a burglar whom he was endeavouring to arrest. Both these serious crimes are still under investigation.

Strength of Force.—The proportion of police to population in New Zealand (1 to 1,289) is still far below that of any State in Australia, and the cost per head is the lowest. Demands are constantly being made for more police and new stations; and there can be no doubt that both are required, but, in view of the necessity for the strictest economy being observed in this as well as other Departments, such demands have been held over, the result being that in many cases the police are unjustly blamed for not giving more attention to matters that could only be coped with by an increase of strength. While giving full consideration to the economical aspect, I think the time has come to increase the strength of the Force by at least fifty men. As will be seen by extracts from the annual reports of officers in charge of districts, which are appended, it would require seventy men to comply with their recommendations, and I cannot say that they have overestimated the requirements of their respective districts. In this connection I may mention that the proportion of police to population forty years ago was 1 to 1,158; it is now 1 to 1,289; and the work performed for other Departments by the police in those days is not to be compared with that done now.

Training-depot.—The depot was reopened in May last year, and recruits have received three months' instruction before being posted for duty. The importance of the training imparted in the depot course cannot be overestimated, either from the point of view of the public, who have to deal with officers who have a fair idea of their duty, or of the men themselves, who gain a spirit of confidence and knowledge of their powers which enables them to carry out their work without hesitation.

Traffic Police.—During the year the system of traffic control by the police, which has been in force at Auckland and Wellington for some years past, was extended to Christchurch. All probationers now receive instruction in traffic work in the depot.

I append extracts from reports of officers in charge of districts.

A. H. WRIGHT,
Commissioner of Police.

EXTRACTS FROM ANNUAL REPORTS OF OFFICERS IN CHARGE OF DISTRICTS.

INSPECTOR EMERSON, WHANGAREI DISTRICT.

There has been an increase of one constable at Whangarei and one constable at Kaitia.

A single man's station was opened on the railway-construction works at Waikiekie on the 31st May, 1921, and removed to Waiotira in September of the same year.

The number of offences reported during the year total 874 as against 699 for the previous year. Action was taken in 841 cases. Increases are reported in the following offences: Indecent acts, 4; assaults, 7; rape, 4; thefts (undescribed), 53; false pretences, 6; burglary, 4; housebreaking, 23; forgery, 4; mischief, 7; breaches of peace, 18; drunkenness, 106; assaulting police, 5; selling or keeping open for sale of liquor, 5. Decreases are shown in the following offences: Grossly indecent acts, 7; obscene language, 15; found in common gaming-house, 6; unlawful betting, 24; illegally supplying liquor to Natives, 14; found on licensed premises after hours, 7; selling or exposing liquor for sale without license, 6; supplying liquor to Natives in proclaimed district, 11. There has been no serious crime in the district.

The conduct of the members of the Force has been good. There were no defaulters during the year.

The population in the district is on the increase. Whangarei is growing very fast, and the district appears to be prosperous.