

During the year 1930 there was a considerable increase in the number of offences reported—namely, 755. Of 8,607 offences reported, 7,287 were dealt with either by arrest or summons, leaving 15·3 per cent. undetected. It is noticed that the chief increases are in thefts and other acts of dishonesty, and in breaches in connection with motor-cars. There is a falling-off in the offences relating to drunkenness and drinking: less drunkenness, more thieving. It is in the cases of theft and kindred offences that the number of undetected offences occur.

Of those members of the Force who were dealt with for breaches of the regulations, it was deemed necessary to inflict penalties in only seven cases, the circumstances of the other charges meriting only a caution or reprimand.

The use of motor-vehicles at district headquarters has in the past been found of great assistance in checking and detecting crime by a regular patrol. Hitherto two old motor-bicycles have been in use here, but as they broke down beyond repair some time ago the want of them has been greatly felt—in fact, it is practically imperative that such facilities for transport should be provided here. I recommend that a car of the smaller type, such as a Standard 9, be procured. This would be quiet-running and very useful for patrol at night in the outer areas of the city. It would carry four persons in an emergency. The cost of running and maintenance would be low. A high-powered motor-cycle is also required here to facilitate prompt attention to complaints from the outlying parts of the suburbs and for the detection of speeding motorists.

INSPECTOR ECCLES, HAMILTON DISTRICT.

The number of offences reported for the year ended 13th December, 1930, was 2,060, as compared with 2,124 during the previous year, showing a decrease of 64. Of the offences reported, 1,889 were accounted for by arrest or summons, leaving 171 undetected. Of the cases dealt with, 138 were committed for trial, of which 120 were convicted. There were 1,663 summary convictions and 93 dismissals. The decrease in the number of offences is connected with the offence of drunkenness, and is probably due to less money being spent in liquor on account of the economic depression.

The only cases of serious crime in this district during the year were those committed by nine young men, known as the "Cambridge gangsters." Eight were convicted on thirty charges of arson, two charges of attempted arson, ten charges of mischief, seventeen charges of theft, five charges of unlawful conversion of motor-cars, and three charges of receiving stolen property. Seven of the offenders were sentenced to various terms of imprisonment, while one offender received three years' probation at the Supreme Court, Hamilton. One accused was acquitted on all charges. The offences were committed in the Cambridge and Hamilton districts, and the total value of house property destroyed by fire amounted to £3,780. The offenders had been operating for some months, and caused a lot of worry and anxiety to the members of the Police Force and the public, but, thanks to the co-operation of the detective and uniform branch of the service, a large number of serious crimes committed by the offenders were detected.

A serious crime was committed by a farm labourer who administered poison in his employer's food while working on a farm in the Te Awamutu district. The offender was arrested and pleaded guilty, and was sentenced to three years' hard labour.

There were five constables convicted and fined for minor breaches of the Police Regulations during the year, and, with these exceptions, the conduct of the police was good.

INSPECTOR O'HALLORAN, GISBORNE DISTRICT.

The offences return for the year ended 31st December, 1930, showed a total of 1,755 offences reported, as compared with 1,362 in the previous year, an increase of 393. Arrests or summonses resulted in 1,717 cases, leaving 38 cases undetected. The most noticeable increases were in breaches of Motor-vehicles Act, found on licensed premises after closing-hours, breaches of prohibition orders, failing for fourteen days to pay maintenance-moneys, vagrancy, theft (undescribed), and carnally knowing girls under sixteen years.

The district has been free from serious crime during the year, with the exception of a mild epidemic of burglaries at Opotiki. In this matter I would like to mention the good work done by the detective staff, with the assistance of the Opotiki police, in clearing up this series of burglaries, which had been going on there for about twelve months. Seven offenders were dealt with and convicted, and most of them sentenced to terms of imprisonment.

The conduct of all members of the Force has been good during the year, with the exception of one constable, who was suspected of tippling, and was transferred to another district to be placed under the supervision of a sergeant.

I beg to suggest that it is time an amendment was made to section 127, subsection (4), of the Licensing Act, 1908, and section 30 of the Licensing Amendment Act, 1910, and also to the Licensing Amendment Act, 1920, regarding the distance a hotel license can be removed, and I would respectfully suggest that the location of hotels should be left to the discretion of the Licensing Committee of the district as to the most suitable locality for a license.

In this district there are several hotels which were useful in the past, but which are now of no use at all, owing to the main roads being far removed from them, and great inconvenience is caused to travellers, who have to leave the main highways and travel several miles to get accommodation at these hotels, or decide to continue many miles farther on their journey. Most of these houses were conveniently placed in the days of coach and horses, but since the advent and general use of motor-cars they are not placed where they are convenient for the travelling public. A very marked case in this respect will be the Motu Hotel when the new Waioeka Road is opened. The junction will be at Matawai, a distance of nine miles from Motu, and there will be no accommodation at Matawai for persons who wish to stay there overnight. This hotel license could be removed from Motu to Matawai if the Licensing Act were amended to give the power to do so. Then again, on the East Coast there are at least two hotels far removed from the main highway and altogether out of the way of the travelling public. It is very difficult to know just what standard of accommodation should be insisted on where hotels are far removed from the main roads and not required in their present locality.