

insisted that he remain on duty assisting his fellow-officers in the grand work they were doing in rescuing the injured and recovering the dead bodies from the ruined buildings and debris, which covered all the main streets. This constable's action is worthy of special mention. The whole of the police in the district did wonderful work in their respective towns. They worked night and day until police from Wellington, Palmerston North, Wanganui, and Auckland arrived to assist them. I cannot speak too highly of the magnificent work the police performed, and I greatly appreciated the assistance given me by the Hon. the Minister in Charge of Police, other Ministers of the Crown, the Commissioner, and other members of the Police Force. All our men in the affected area lost a considerable amount of their goods and chattels—some, of course, more than others. We had a number of special police sworn in to assist us in guarding the property of people who left their homes. These men, who were supervised by Captain Johnson, of the Defence Department, did very good work, and their conduct generally was good. The ten days' extra leave granted by the Hon. the Minister in Charge of Police has been greatly appreciated by all members of the Force in the stricken area.

Through the whole dreadful period the behaviour of the people in the affected area was praiseworthy in the extreme. Doctors, nurses, the clergy, all performed wonderful service. Another noble band of workers were the grave-diggers, whose work cannot be too highly praised. There were also those who assisted us in searching the debris for dead bodies. Notably amongst the latter was Mr. J. O'Brien, M.P. for Westland, who took his place among the workers and with his ripe experience of mining his services were invaluable in advising how to demolish dangerous walls and clear the debris in search for bodies. Another gentleman worthy of mention was Mr. A. Drummond Duthie, of Wellington, who assisted in the identification of the bodies brought to the morgue.

The conduct of the hotels, with a few exceptions, was excellent. Seven hotels in the Napier Licensing District were completely destroyed, while others were more or less extensively damaged. In Hastings one hotel was completely destroyed, and others damaged. At Mohaka the hotel was destroyed by earthquake and fire. Other hotels in the affected area were damaged more or less severely. The action of the hotelkeepers in voluntarily closing their bars is to be commended.

I should mention the fine work performed by the Territorials of Hastings, who picketed that town for a considerable period. The pickets on the main highway from Dannevirke to Napier also did excellent service in turning back motorists and others who were merely visiting the devastated area for sight-seeing purposes or in search of work.

The Department's loss in buildings and damage is not as big as we might have expected in the circumstances. Only one building (a brick one), at Taradale, is a total loss: it was an old building. The other buildings, all wood and iron, with the exception of the new offices at Hastings (which are of brick), were not extensively damaged, except in a couple of instances. The new offices at Hastings were undamaged except for the chimneys coming down. The total estimate of damage done to buildings is £2,046. No other Departmental property was destroyed.

Some sixty-odd motor-cars were destroyed in the streets of Napier during the earthquake.

The total loss in the district through the earthquake and fires immediately following the earthquake is estimated at many millions.

INSPECTOR FRASER, NEW PLYMOUTH DISTRICT.

The offences return for the year ending 31st December, 1930, shows the total number of all offences committed to be 1,309, compared with 1,422 for the previous twelve months, being a decrease of 113. Of all the offences reported 1,268 were accounted for by arrest or summons, leaving 41 undetected. Of all the cases dealt with 162 males and one female were committed for trial or sentence, and of those committed 155 males were convicted.

Two serious crimes were committed during the year. One male was found guilty of murdering his wife, and sentenced to death, which was later commuted to imprisonment for life. The other was an Indian who called himself a herbalist. He was convicted and sentenced on a charge of manslaughter.

The general conduct of the police during the past twelve months has been good and their duties satisfactorily performed. Three constables had to be fined for breaches of the regulations.

INSPECTOR McILVENNEY, WANGANUI DISTRICT.

The police-station at Moawhango was closed during the year and the services of the district constable who had charge of same were dispensed with. The police work in that locality is now attended to by the Taihape police.

There were 1,516 offences reported during the year, compared with 1,152 in 1929. Arrests or summonses resulted in 1,465 cases. The principal increases in offences reported appear in respect of theft, mischief, drunkenness, and driving in a manner dangerous to the public (120). The increase in offences of driving in a manner dangerous to the public may be accounted for by a greater number of motor-vehicles passing through the city and suburbs and stricter vigilance on the part of the police with a view to suppression of the dangerous practice.

Regarding serious crime, there was one case of murder, in respect of which a man was sentenced to death (later commuted to imprisonment for life). The probable cause of the crime was jealousy.

A charge of attempted murder was preferred against a man who attacked his wife with an axe at Ohura. When the case came before the Supreme Court at Hamilton the grand jury returned "No bill" on the attempted murder charge, and the accused was later acquitted by the common jury on a charge of assault causing actual bodily harm arising out of the same set of facts. The cause of this crime was also jealousy.

The conduct of the police generally has been good, one only having to be dealt with under Police Regulations.