

INSPECTOR MARTIN, GISBORNE DISTRICT.

There has been a decrease of one sergeant in the strength since last year, the sergeant at Tokomaru Bay being transferred and not replaced, as it was considered he was no longer required there. Owing to the improved condition of the roads, the East Coast can now be conveniently supervised from Gisborne, and in recent years there has been very little crime at Tokomaru Bay. One constable is now controlling that sub-district.

To properly maintain the beats at Gisborne two extra constables are required at the Gisborne station. Owing to the isolation of this district the escort duty is a big item, and the escorting constable is usually away for several days on each escort, thereby causing a shortage for beat duty. Previously the constable at Tokomaru Bay carried out relieving duties on the East Coast when members were on annual leave, but as there is now only one member of the Force stationed at Tokomaru Bay the relieving duty has to be carried out by a constable from Gisborne.

I consider that in the near future an extra constable will be required in the Bay of Plenty owing to the noticeable increase in the population at Opotiki and Whakatane. Large paper-mills are in course of construction at Whakatane, and this will considerably increase the police work.

When work is resumed at this end of the Napier-Gisborne Railway a constable will require to be stationed on the works, as previously.

During the year the police-station at Port Awanui was closed and a new station opened at Tikitiki, in the same locality. This change was necessary, as Port Awanui is now well off the main highway and there are few residents there, while Tikitiki is the main centre in that sub-district and on the main highway.

The offences return for the year ended 31st December, 1935, showed a total of 1,106 offences reported, as compared with 983 in the previous year, an increase of 123. Arrests or summonses resulted in 1,046 cases, leaving 60 undetected. Of the cases dealt with, 48 were committed for trial or sentence, of which 47 were convicted.

The most noticeable increase was in breaches of the Motor-vehicles Act.

The district has been free from crime of a very serious nature during the year.

The conduct of the members of the Force in the country districts during the past twelve months has been very good, each and every one having given of his best. This also applies to most of the members at the Gisborne station, but one constable was reduced five years in seniority and pay for serious breaches of the regulations, one other fined for minor breaches, and at present serious charges of breaches of the regulations are pending against two constables.

INSPECTOR FITZPATRICK, NAPIER DISTRICT.

I would recommend the permanent increase of a constable at Hastings for beat duty, owing to the size of the town and business area which necessitates more police supervision.

For the year ending 31st December, 1935, the total number of offences reported was 1,439, a decrease on the previous year of 226. Of the offences reported, 1,320 were accounted for by arrest or summons.

The principal decreases were in found on licensed premises after closing-hours and breaches of the Motor-vehicles Act.

I regret having to report the commission of three serious crimes during the year. In the first case a young woman forwarded through the Post Office a packet containing poisoned chocolates to another young woman. The sender was prosecuted for attempted murder, but was acquitted by a jury in the Supreme Court.

In the second case an aged married man attempted to cut his wife's throat; he was prosecuted for attempted murder, but was found to be insane and unfit to plead. He has been detained in a Mental Hospital.

In the third case a girl, six years of age, a pupil at a public school near Hastings, left the school at 3 p.m. for her home; she failed to reach home, and her body was found twenty-four hours later in the bed of a creek. The child's face had been pressed down in the mud, and the medical evidence was to the effect that the child had died from suffocation. It was evident that force had been used to press the face of the child in the mud until death had taken place. The deceased child had not been sexually interfered with. Dominion wide as well as exhaustive local inquiries have been made to trace the person guilty of this heinous crime, but I regret to say that the culprit has not been traced up to date. No evidence was forthcoming as to any person being in the child's company from the time she left the school until the body was found.

With the exception of one constable being convicted for a breach of the Police Regulations, the conduct of the members of the Force has been excellent, and a high standard of efficiency maintained.

INSPECTOR POWELL, NEW PLYMOUTH DISTRICT.

The offences return for the year ending December, 1935, shows a total of all offences committed to be 1,295, compared with 1,185 offences for the previous year, being an increase of 110 offences. Of the number reported, 1,235 were accounted for by arrest or summons, equal to 95·36 per cent.

No crime committed during the year calls for special mention.

The principal offences showing an increase were forgery and uttering, house and shop breaking, unlawful use of motor-cars, found on licensed premises after closing-hours, and breaches of the Arms Act.

The conduct of the police has been excellent during the year, only one constable being dealt with for breaches of the regulations.

The duties have been performed in a satisfactory manner.

I wish to draw attention to the necessity of increasing the strength of the Force. Four extra constables and one detective are required at New Plymouth. An extra constable is also required at Hawera and a second constable at Waitara.