

SUPERINTENDENT RAWLE, DUNEDIN DISTRICT.

An increase of one sergeant and five constables above the authorized strength is required—viz., the sergeant for relieving in cases of sickness, annual leave, and inquiries; one constable for Mosgiel; one for North Dunedin; and three for Central Station to man an additional proposed beat in the reclaimed area where warehouses, oil-tanks, and various businesses are at present without protection, and to keep the night-duty beats fully manned, which cannot be done under the present strength due to sickness, leave, and relieving duties.

One new station was opened at Maori Hill, but no stations were closed during the year. Proposals to remove Ophir Station to Omakau and St. Bathans to Oturua have been made. In each case this course is necessary on account of shifting populations.

The annual offences return for the year ending 31st December, 1936, discloses that 2,951 offences were reported, as against 2,882 for the previous year, being an increase of 69 offences. Of the number of offences reported, 2,836 persons were arrested or brought up on summons, leaving 115 undetected offences, being approximately 96.1 per cent. detected and 3.9 per cent. undetected.

Of those charged, 73 males were committed for trial, &c., and of these 61 were convicted of the offences with which they were charged.

Male persons numbering 2,601 and females numbering 56 were summarily convicted, while cases against 102 males and 4 females were dismissed.

The principal increases were thefts from dwellings, mischief, reckless driving, and other breaches of Motor-vehicles Act.

The decreases were in assault, thefts, breaches of Destitute Persons Act, and the Licensing Act.

There were two persons charged with murder, both of whom were acquitted, one being found insane.

A man and his wife were murdered at Ravensbourne by their son aged twenty-two years, who was acquitted on the grounds of insanity and committed to the mental hospital.

A man was charged with murdering another at Balclutha, and after a trial lasting one week was acquitted by the jury. The facts were that accused and his two brothers tried to force their way through the victim's property, when the latter, his wife, and son tried to stop them. In the fracas which followed deceased was struck over the head, his skull was fractured, and he later died.

There was one case of manslaughter at Palmerston South. A man fatally kicked another on the head during a drunken brawl, and was convicted at Dunedin in October last.

The increase in reckless driving and in other breaches of the Motor-vehicles Act is no doubt caused by the increased number of vehicles using the highways due to more prosperous times, whilst the principal decreases—theft and offences under Destitute Persons Act—are due to more work being available and sustenance being provided to those in want.

The general conduct of the police during the year has been good, all members taking a keen interest in their duties, which have been satisfactorily performed.

Six constables were dealt with during the year for minor breaches of the regulations, fines being inflicted in each case.

During the year there has been inaugurated a class on criminal investigation in all its aspects, the presentation of criminal cases in Court, criminal law, and evidence. These are conducted by the Chief Detective twice weekly for the detective staff, and a number of the uniform branch have also taken advantage of these lectures when room and time permits.

This should prove of benefit both to the Department and to members of the Force.

I recommend that Motor Regulation 14 (5), 1933, now repealed, be included in the regulations, 1936, as it is necessary to control parking in hilly streets surrounding the city.

Recently an accident which ended fatally was due to a cyclist colliding with a motor-car door opened on the right-hand side.

I recommend a regulation prohibiting the opening of right-hand doors in main thoroughfares.

INSPECTOR GIBSON, INVERCARGILL DISTRICT.

I would strongly recommend that an extra constable be stationed at Gore for beat duty and to assist in relieving men on annual leave. At present there are for many months only two men for beat duty, due to one man having to relieve at country stations.

The offences return for the year shows a total of 1,133 offences reported, a decrease of 23 on the previous year's figures; arrests or summonses resulted in 1,051 cases. The principal decrease was in thefts, this no doubt being due to better times. An increase of drunkenness, also an increase of persons found illegally on licensed premises, are no doubt due to the same reason.

During the year a young man was killed by shooting. The offender, a bank clerk, was charged with murder and manslaughter, but was acquitted. The deceased with three others were invited into bank premises by two clerks, and while there drinking was indulged in. About 4 a.m. some altercation took place, and one of the clerks fired three shots, killing the young man referred to. The accused was only seventeen years of age, and with another youth of twenty years was left in charge of the bank with a revolver each. These youths were too young and inexperienced to be left in charge of revolvers.

There has been no noticeable increase in crime during the year.

The conduct of the members of the Force during the year was good. One constable was fined for breaches of the regulations and transferred.

I again recommend that section 80 of the Stock Act be amended to give power to the police to lay informations. This is essential, particularly where persons are found unlawfully driving or carrying stock during the night.