

EXTRACTS FROM ANNUAL REPORTS OF OFFICERS IN CHARGE OF DISTRICTS.

INSPECTOR EMERSON, WHANGAREI DISTRICT.

I took charge of the district on the 1st January, 1921.

The strength of the Force at the 31st March last was—1 Inspector, 1 Senior Sergeant, 2 sergeants, 18 constables, 1 detective, 1 district constable, and 3 Native constables.

There has been an increase of one constable at Whangarei, and a decrease of a Native constable, who resigned, at Kaitaia. I recommend that a second constable be appointed to Kaitaia, as the work there is far too much for one constable to cope with; further, I recommend that two additional constables be appointed to Whangarei Station. At present there are three constables for street duty at Whangarei. One of them is fully engaged on inquiries, a second is almost half his time away on escort, and the third attends to town duty. Whangarei is a growing town, and more police are required to deal with work coming in.

Inspector L. Mullany, who was in charge of the district, died on the 22nd August, 1920. The Native constable, stationed at Kaitaia, was discharged on voluntary resignation on the 31st July, 1920. These were the only casualties during the year.

The number of offences reported during the year total 699, as against 698 the previous year. Of the offences reported there were 678 in which action was taken. Increases in the following offences are reported: Mischief, 9; murder, 1; drunkenness, 16; drunk and disorderly, 9; unlawfully using horses, motor-cars, &c., 10; betting, unlawful, 23; failing to pay maintenance-moneys, 7; illegally supplying liquor to Natives, 10. Decreases are shown in the following offences: Assaults (common), 34; theft (undescribed), 36; house or shop breaking, 14; breach of peace, 13; cruelty to animals, 5; drunk in charge of horses, 9; breaches of prohibition orders, 21.

The only serious crimes committed during the year were two alleged murders. One Wiremu Pita was charged with shooting Douglas Phillips at Mokau on the 30th May, 1920. He was acquitted at Auckland Supreme Court. The other case was that of Thomas Needham, who killed his son at Maungaturoto in January last. He was found guilty of manslaughter and sentenced to five years' imprisonment.

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

SUPERINTENDENT WRIGHT, AUCKLAND DISTRICT.

The authorized strength on the 31st March last was—1 Superintendent, 1 Inspector, 1 Sub-Inspector, 2 Senior Sergeants, 21 sergeants, 127 constables, 1 Senior Detective, 4 detective sergeants, 8 detectives, 1 acting detective; total 167. In addition there were 2 matrons, 1 police surgeon, and 3 district constables.

During the year the northern portion of the Auckland District was formed into a separate district under an Inspector, with headquarters at Whangarei. The following stations—viz., Aratapu, Dargaville, Hikurangi, Houhora, Kaikohe, Kaitaia, Kawakawa, Mangawai, Mangonui, Maungaturoto, Ohaeawai, Rawene, Waipu, Whangarei, Whangaroa, and Russell—were included therein. This will afford much better supervision over the northern portion of the Dominion, and tend to efficiency.

The only increase to the strength during the year has been 1 sergeant at Freeman's Bay (Auckland), 1 detective-sergeant at Auckland, and 1 constable at Queen Street Wharf.

During the past five years the total increase to the strength of the district as now constituted has been 3 sergeants, 2 detectives, and 1 constable—an absurdly inadequate number. This has been due to the difficulty of recruiting, and not through any desire on the part of the Department to limit the employment of a sufficient number to meet requirements. At the same time the inadequate staff has caused the responsible officers considerable anxiety, and thrown upon all a task which they have had hard work to carry out satisfactorily.

At the present time the following increases are urgently required: 15 constables for the city, 1 constable for Mount Eden, 1 constable for Newmarket, 1 constable for Freeman's Bay, 2 constables for the wharf, and 1 constable for Onehunga, a total of 21. This will only satisfy the existing pressing demand.

The casualties during the year have been—Superannuated, 1 sergeant and 1 constable; discharged as unsuitable, 3 constables; resigned, 17 constables. A great proportion of the latter were temporary constables who found that the work did not suit them.

The offences return for this district shows that in 1920 a total of 5,214 offences were reported, as compared with 4,834 the previous year, a net increase of 380. Of the offences reported over 95 per cent. were accounted for either by arrest or summons, leaving 249 undetected; 310 cases were committed, for trial, and 265 of them resulted in convictions at the Supreme Court; 4,238 were summarily convicted, and 417 discharged. The offences return shows increases under the headings of theft (undescribed), 101; house and shop breaking, 25; receiving stolen property, 36; forgery, 23; drunkenness, 302; obscene language, 33; vagrancy, 27; failing to maintain families, 30; disobeying maintenance orders, 67; embezzling cargo, 33; keeping brothels, 22. Decreases under the following headings are shown: Assaults, 32; gaming with instruments, 49; selling liquor after hours, 46; breach of prohibition orders, 131. None of these figures call for special comment, as they are the increases and decreases experienced year by year.