

The only casualties were 1 constable dismissed, 1 constable resigned, and 1 sergeant reduced to constable.

The total number of offences reported was 1,285, as against 1,426 for the previous year—a decrease of 141, of which 135 is accounted for by the decrease in drunkenness alone. 1,194 prosecutions took place, leaving 91—nearly all minor offences—unaccounted for. Increases appear in the offences return under the headings of—False pretences, 13; house and shop breaking, 41; forgery, 12; failure to pay maintenance-moneys, 38; found on licensed premises after hours, 16; trespass on railways, 8; smuggling, 6; murder, 2. Decreases appear under—Theft from dwellings, 18; mischief 28; drunkenness, 135; obscene and profane language, 19; found in gaming-houses, 18; failure to maintain wives and children, 35; breach of prohibition order, 21.

Regarding the two murders, in one case an elderly man killed his own daughter, a girl of seven or eight years of age, by striking her on the head with a stick. He was convicted of the crime and sentenced to death, but the sentence was commuted to imprisonment for life. The other case was that of a young woman whose death was caused by an illegal operation performed on her by a woman, who was tried for the murder, but was acquitted. She was, however, convicted at the same sessions of procuring abortion, and sentenced to a term of imprisonment. With the exception of these two cases, the district has, as usual, been remarkably free from crime of a serious nature.

The conduct of the police of all ranks, with a few exceptions, has been good. The younger men, who were rather unsettled for a time, are now more attentive to their duties, and are generally giving as much satisfaction as could be expected considering their lack of training and experience.

With reference to the recent legislation, I do not think the Gaming Act, 1920, will be of much assistance to the police in putting the bookmakers out of action while the offenders have the right of trial by jury. I would suggest that all offences under the Gaming Acts be brought within the summary jurisdiction of the Magistrate's Court.

I desire to draw attention to the fact that games which are declared by the Gaming Act, 1908, to be unlawful games are extensively carried on throughout the Dominion; but because the games are not played "in or in view of a public place or on premises of which the players have the use" within the meaning of that expression in the Gaming Act it has been held that there is no offence. It is quite a common practice for wharf labourers to assemble in sheds on wharves and play "two-up" and "sing-tai-loo" there. The employees of many large freezing-works and factories also play "two-up" on or near the premises, and in some places crowds of young men assemble in secluded places near the towns on Sundays and form what are known as "two-up schools" in the open air. Complaints are frequently made about this "two-up" playing, and people wonder why the police do not prosecute. If it is considered desirable to suppress this form of gambling, it should be made an offence to play an unlawful game anywhere.

INSPECTOR DEW, INVERCARGILL DISTRICT.

The strength of the Force in this district on the 31st March, 1921, was as follows: 1 Inspector, 1 Senior-Sergeant, 1 detective, 3 sergeants, and 38 constables; total, 43. The authorized strength is 42, but this is not sufficient to cope with the work of the district, and the total strength should be brought up to 45.

Residences for the Senior Sergeant, detective-sergeant, and sergeant were acquired at Invercargill during the last twelve months. It is now necessary to provide one for the officer in charge, or to build one on a site held by the Department.

The conduct of the men stationed here at present has been good, and they have all performed their work satisfactorily.

Three temporary constables were dealt with as defaulters; one resigned, and two were transferred.

An instruction class is still conducted by the Senior Sergeant, as opportunity permits, the good effect of which is noticeable on those attending. An improvement is noticeable in the physique of recruits offering lately, and I have been able to recommend a few very desirable men.

The total number of offences reported during the year ended 31st December, 1920, was 898, as against 837 for the year 1919. The principal increases were—Assaults, 17; thefts, 30; Breaking and entering, 6; drunkenness, 42; obscene language, 11; vagrancy, 13; gaming, 23. 93·8 per cent. of the offences reported were accounted for either by summons or arrest.