

## POLICE BUILDINGS, ETC.

The following works in connection with police-stations have been carried out during the year by the Public Works Department :

New buildings erected : Waikare (new station) ; Matamata (station removed from Karangahake and re-erected).

Properties purchased : Police-stations—Whataupoko (Gisborne), Invercargill North, Takapau, Tuatapere, and Winton. Site for Police-station—Ongaonga.

Renovations, alterations, and improvements were effected at Kaikohe, Kawakawa, Whangaroa, Auckland (Inspector's residence), Newton, Newmarket, Birkenhead, Helensville, Papakura, Wellsford, Huntly, Thames, Morrinsville, Mercury Bay, Tauranga, Katikati, Wairoa, Gisborne, Te Kuiti, Taumarunui, Ongarue, Headquarters (Wellington), Mount Cook, Taranaki Street (Wellington), Wellington South, Training Depot, Chief Detective's residence (Wellington), Terrace End, Ashhurst, Pahiatua, Palmerston North (Inspector's residence), Palmerston North Police-station, Hawera, Masterton, Johnsonville, Motueka, Richmond, Seddon, Chatham Islands, St. Andrew's, Balclutha, Bluff, Invercargill South, Green Island, Lawrence, Lumsden, Matura, Milton, Nightcaps, Ophir, Port Chalmers, Queenstown, Ravensbourne, Riverton, St. Kilda, Tapanui, Waikiwi, Woodhaugh.

## GENERAL.

On the 31st December last Commissioner John O'Donovan, M.V.O., retired from the Force after a long and honourable career, and I was appointed to succeed him as from the 1st January.

*Arms Act.*—This Act has now been in force since the 1st January, 1921, and the whole of the arms in the Dominion are supposed to be registered. They number approximately 200,000. There is no reason to believe that any considerable number is unregistered, although an occasional one comes to light from time to time, and the owner is prosecuted unless he can satisfactorily explain his neglect. The Act will, I have no doubt, prove beneficial in many ways, especially as regards the indiscriminate way in which youths and irresponsible persons were allowed to possess and use dangerous weapons.

There is really no need for ordinary citizens to have revolvers in their possession. Few persons are competent to handle them, and when occasions do arise where they might be of assistance they are not at hand. Many cases are on record that illustrate the danger of keeping loaded revolvers about dwellings, but none have ever come under my notice where such weapons have been the means of either preventing a burglary or securing the arrest of a thief.

The purchase of revolvers has been discouraged, and no permits issued unless good reasons are shown. Permits to carry pistols have also been restricted to really responsible persons, and for good reasons.

*Balance-sheet.*—As each Department is now required to furnish a balance-sheet, it may not be out of place to remark that any revenue the police are instrumental in obtaining is not credited to the Department. Fines which are inflicted through police action are affixed to Court records by means of stamps, and the Stamp Department gets the credit. Work done for other Departments is not charged for, as it would be almost impossible to arrive at what would be a fair charge for the time employed on such work, and yet the work done for other branches of the Government Service is enormous ; on the other hand, the Police are charged by other Departments for any service they require. I am not complaining or seeking any remedy for this state of affairs, as I realize that it cannot be avoided ; but I think it right to point out that the Police do not get credit from a money point of view for what they do, and the cost of the Department is consequently high in comparison with other Departments that get credit for work done.

*Buildings.*—During the war and since only absolutely essential repairs have been effected to police-stations, and outside painting has been confined to places that were practically bare. This policy, which is not one in the true interest of economy, will have to be abandoned, or much greater expenditure in the future will be entailed. I trust that money will be available shortly to put all stations in a proper state of repair. New stations are required at a number of places, where the premises are rented at the high rates now ruling.

*Candidates.*—Applications to join the police are now being received in sufficient numbers to allow of a better selection being made than has been the case during the war period and immediately thereafter, and the type offering is quite satisfactory.

*Discipline.*—The conduct of members of the Force has on the whole been exemplary, and very few punishments have been necessary. A small number of recruits have proved unsuitable for the Force and were allowed to resign.

*Districts.*—No alteration in the districts or the method of controlling them has been made during the year.

*Eight-hour System.*—The system of constables and sergeants engaged on beat duty in cities being allowed to perform their eight hours of duty per day continuously (with a small break for refreshment) instead of two periods of four hours each has been given a fair trial in the four centres, and, having given satisfaction both to the officers and men, it has been permanently approved, and will be extended to all places to which it can be applied. The change has been much appreciated by the men, and has helped to make a more contented Force.

*Gaming Offences.*—Until the provision in the Gaming Act giving persons charged with being bookmakers the right of trial by jury is repealed it is almost a waste of time to prosecute. During the year the police succeeded in obtaining clear evidence of bookmaking in several cases. Prosecutions were instituted, and the accused persons were committed for trial. In all but one case (in which it is alleged there was some local feeling against the bookmaker) the juries either disagreed or acquitted in face of very plain directions from the presiding Judges. Finding that convictions could not be