

The principal decreases were—

Indecent assault	25	Using profane, indecent, or obscene language	87
Arson	38	Failing to maintain wives or families ..	288
Breaches of the peace	82	Breaches of prohibition orders	259
Drunkenness	1,439	Being on licensed premises after closing hours	321
Indecent exposure and grossly indecent acts	96	Suicide, attempted	22

The increase in cases of theft and burglary can be attributed largely to economic stress with consequent unemployment.

The increases in 1930 were: thefts, 1,168; burglary, &c., 171; and in 1931, thefts, 559; burglary, &c., 345.

The most noteworthy decrease is in drunkenness. In 1930 there was a decrease from 6,810 to 6,125 and in 1931 from 6,125 to 4,687—that is, in two years a decrease of 2,123 prosecutions, or 31 per cent.

This increase in sobriety is probably affected by decreased purchasing-power in conjunction with changing habits of the people.

The following return shows the number of offences reported in each police district during the year, the number of cases in which arrests or summonses resulted, and the number in which no prosecution followed:—

Police District.	Number of Offences reported.	Number of Offences in which Arrests or Summonses resulted.	Number in which no Arrests or Summonses resulted.
Whangarei	1,164	1,052	112
Auckland	8,449	7,384	1,065
Hamilton	2,036	1,868	168
Gisborne	1,196	1,124	72
Napier	1,963	1,824	139
New Plymouth	1,354	1,283	71
Wanganui	1,257	1,189	68
Palmerston North	1,478	1,411	67
Wellington	6,345	5,646	699
Nelson	972	848	124
Greymouth	1,462	1,380	82
Christchurch	4,705	3,746	959
Timaru	973	903	70
Dunedin	1,881	1,718	163
Invercargill	1,445	1,283	162
Totals	36,680	32,659	4,021

The percentage of arrests or summonses resulting from offences reported during the year 1931 was 89·03, the figures of the preceding year being 90·53.

SERIOUS CRIMES.

The following is a return of the number of serious crimes as compared with the previous year:—

Crimes.	1930.		1931.	
	Number of Offences reported.	Number of Offences in which Arrests resulted.	Number of Offences reported.	Number of Offences in which Arrests resulted.
Arson	68	64	30	28
Robbery and aggravated robbery	31	23	21	15
Burglary, breaking into shops, dwellings, &c. ..	1,263	804	1,608	886
Forgery and uttering	208	196	241	231
Murder	7	7	13	9
Murder, attempted	3	2	5	5
Rape	10	10	7	7
Receiving stolen property	142	142	158	158
Wounding with intent	1	1	1	1
Totals	1,733	1,249	2,084	1,340

The increase in cases of murder from seven in 1930 to thirteen in 1931, although to be noticed with serious regret, should not be regarded as abnormal. There were thirteen cases of murder in the years 1920, 1926, 1927, and over the past thirteen years the average number has been 9·5.