

A satisfactory standard of efficiency has been maintained by both branches of the Service.

I suggest that an amendment to section 18 of the Police Offences Act, 1927, in regard to Sunday trading might be considered.

Subsection (2) makes the keeping open and not the trading the offence. Keeping open in stores and shops is generally difficult to prove where the trading is done per medium of the back door, as invariably the back door is kept closed until such time as someone calls to purchase goods.

Further, the back doors of most shops are not in or in view of a public place; therefore the subsection referred to might be suitably amended by inserting the words "opens or" immediately before the words "keeps open any house, store, shop, &c."

INSPECTOR CARROLL, NELSON DISTRICT.

The strength of the Force in this district is thirty-eight.

During the year one of the detectives stationed at Nelson was transferred to Blenheim, thereby giving effect to a recommendation of my predecessor in his last annual report. In that report there was also a recommendation that a station be opened at Renwicktown, which recommendation I fully endorse. Renwicktown is on the main Blenheim-Nelson highway, about eight miles from Blenheim, and is at present worked from Blenheim. The nearest station on the other side is Havelock, which is twenty-eight miles from Blenheim. If a station were opened at Renwicktown, part of the territory at present worked from Havelock, Blenheim, and Picton stations could be more conveniently worked from there. There is very heavy motor traffic on the main highway passing through Renwicktown, which I think requires more supervision than it can receive at present.

For the year ended 31st December, 1938, the total number of offences reported was 846, against 886 for the previous year, a decrease of 40. Arrest or summons resulted in 809 cases, and 37 were undetected. The principal decreases were in breaches of the Employment Promotion Act, after-hour trading on licensed premises, mischief, and drunkenness. There was an increase in the number of house or shop breaking offences.

On the morning of the 16th December last a woman, and her son aged ten years, were found dead in their beds at Uruwhenua, about ten miles from Takaka. They had been shot through the heads, apparently while they slept. The woman's husband was found in a demented condition with a rifle in his hand. He was arrested and charged with murder, but was subsequently found not guilty on the grounds of insanity in respect of the murder of his wife, and ordered to be detained in a mental institution. The charge of murdering his son was adjourned with a view to obtaining leave to enter a *nolle prosequi*.

The only other serious matter reported in this district was in connection with the finding of the body of a man, minus the head and legs, in a suit-case in Picton Harbour on the 7th May. In that case inquiries revealed that the man had been killed in Wellington by his son, who brought the body to Picton for disposal. The offender was arrested and dealt with in Wellington.

The conduct of all members of the Force during the year has been good; there were no defaulters.

INSPECTOR MACLEAN, GREYMOUTH DISTRICT.

On the 31st March, 1939, the strength of the Force in this district was forty-eight.

A new station was established at Wataroa, and the station at Matainui was closed during the year. The station at Waituta at present in use is rented and the building is unsuitable. Arrangements are being made to build a new station there.

The total number of offences reported during the year ending 31st December, 1938, was 914, compared with 1,112 reported during the previous year. Of all the offences reported, 867 were dealt with by arrest or summons. The principal decreases were persons found illegally on licensed premises, theft, house and shop breaking, and offences by publicans. The principal increases were failing to maintain wives and children, drunkenness, and breaches of the Arms and Motor-vehicles Acts. No serious crimes were reported during the year, and none of the cases call for special mention.

The general conduct of the police has been excellent; only two constables were dealt with for breaches of the Police Regulations.

SUPERINTENDENT CAMERON, CHRISTCHURCH DISTRICT.

On the 31st of March, 1939, the authorized strength of the Force in this district was 169, being an increase of one on the previous year. The strength of sergeants has been increased by one.

The total number of offences reported during the year was 4,834, compared with 4,666 during the previous year, being an increase of 168.

The principal increases appear under the following headings: Obtaining credit by fraud, shop and house breaking, mischief, drunkenness, unlawfully using horses, motor-cars, &c., injuring pillar-boxes, being intoxicated in charge of motor-vehicles, reckless or negligent driving, and other breaches of Motor-vehicles Act.

There were decreases in the following cases: False pretences, burglary, Sunday trading, found in common gaming-house, and failing to maintain wives and children.

Of the increases, it might be stated that in the cases of obtaining credit by fraud the offences were under the Employment Promotion Act. In breaking, entering, and theft the offenders were mostly youths and young men, while boys were mainly responsible in the cases of mischief. The increases in drunkenness can be accounted for by the improved working-conditions of the working classes, while youths are mainly responsible for the unlawful conversion of motor-cars. The increase