

be taken to prevent, as far as possible, any prisoner from sustaining injury as the result of his imprisonment. The daily average of sick has been 10·6 males and 5·5 females, showing a daily average decrease of 6·08 males, with an average daily increase of 1·19 females, or a total daily average decrease of 4·89 on the previous year. This percentage of sick is much swelled by the practice being still observed of sending persons suffering from drink—persons actually suffering from *delirium tremens*—and supposed lunatics, to prisons for medical treatment, instead of to hospitals or lunatic asylums. It cannot for a moment be argued that prisons are suitable places for the treatment of such cases—there is no nursing staff, no suitable accommodation, no night-cooking, and discipline must be seriously interfered with while such cases are under treatment. As the matter has now been under consideration for some time, it is to be hoped some suitable institutions for the treatment of such cases will without further delay be found, and so one more blot in the administration of our prisons be wiped out. There has been a considerable diminution during the past year in cases of prisoners malingering and pretending sickness to escape hard labour. Six deaths occurred in prisons during the year, as against four in 1888—viz., two males and one female at Auckland, one male at Lyttelton, and two males in Wellington: in each case a Coroner's inquest was held, as prescribed by the Prisons Act. A large number of prisoners, both male and female, have been received into the prisons during the year as vagrants, whose only crime appeared to be that from old age and infirmities they were unable to earn their living, and should have been sent to some home or refuge instead of to prison.

6. There were two executions during the year, both Native male prisoners. Both took place at Napier Prison, and were properly and successfully carried out.

7. Table A further shows that in the year 1888 there passed through the prisons 4,242 males and 938 females, whilst during the past year the numbers were 3,872 males and 802 females; being a substantial decrease of no less than 370 males and 136 females, giving a total decrease of cases dealt with of 506. When it is remembered that in 1888 there was a decrease of 243, and that this is again followed by such a satisfactory diminution as 506, it may with justice be claimed for the system of administration now in force in the prisons of the colony that these statistics prove beyond a doubt that prisons are more and more becoming dreaded places of resort by the rising generation, and that in some cases, at least, attempts to reform criminals are succeeding.

8. During the past year the daily average number of prisoners in gaols has been 551·22 males and 75·02 females, as against 591·26 males and 86·13 females in the previous year; being a net average decrease of 51·15 for the year as compared with 1888.

9. According to the figures obtained from the Registrar-General, the population of the colony was at the end of 1889 354,611 males and 307,637 females; total, 662,248 persons: whilst the number of prisoners at that date was 552 males and 81 females—633 in all. The average percentage of prisoners according to population was therefore 0·096, a decrease of 0·003 on the previous year.

10. During the past year 65 male and no female misdemeanants in default were detained in the gaols of the colony, and during the same period 87 males and 25 females, supposed lunatics, were detained in the various prisons; giving an increase of 18 males, with a decrease of 5 females, supposed lunatics, and a decrease of 40 males and 6 female misdemeanants in default, on the previous year.

11. With reference to prisoners under sentence of penal servitude, there were at the close of last year in the various prisons 189 males and 6 females; being a decrease of 3 males, with the same number of females as on the previous year.

12. During the year 1889, 293 males and 46 females were acquitted, or discharged after remand; being a decrease of 130 males and 17 females, or a total decrease of 147 on the previous year.

13. From the figures given under Table B, it will be found that the prisoners were maintained last year at a gross cost per head of £45 15s. 8d., as against £44 3s. 1d.; but this slight increase is at once accounted for by the large decrease in the number of prisoners who passed through the gaols: and, coming to the net cost per head, we find that (exclusive of the work performed for the Defence Department at the fortifications) it was £38 6s. 5d., as against £33 9s. 4d. in 1888. The gross totals are made up as follows: Staff supervision, £28 19s. 7d., as against £27 14s. 11d. in 1888; maintenance, £13 9s. 5d., as against £13 4s. 9d.; incidental, £3 6s. 8d., as against £3 3s. 5d. This increase is easily accounted for when it is taken into consideration that no credit is given for the work done by the prisoners for the Defence Department, whilst the fact of the men being so employed, of course, prevents carrying out remunerative work with them as in former years, for which credit was taken by the department. On referring to the report of the Directors of the English Convict Prisons for the last year, it will be found that at one prison the gross cost per prisoner was as high as £61 17s. 3d., while the lowest was £33 3s. 3d. This appears to me to speak well for the economy of our colonial system, especially when it is remembered that every expenditure in connection with the various prisons is debited to each respectively, and the simple but accurate system adopted for keeping the accounts prevents the possibility of any incorrect charges being made or fictitious credits taken. Again, it must be borne in mind that a large sum out of the expenditure under the heading of "Incidentals" is recouped to the Government, and is in reality merely a transfer—namely, to Railways, £336 8s. 4d., and Post and Telegraph, £112; total, £448 8s. 4d.

14. That local prisons can be made self-supporting is a fallacy which no sensible person at all well versed in prison matters would for a moment attempt to adopt. Even supposing that every man and woman incarcerated in a prison were working daily during their period of confinement, the amount of remunerative labour performed could not even then make the establishment self-supporting; but when it is taken into account that prisoners awaiting trial, misdemeanants, remands, sick, those excused on medical grounds, are exempted from all labour, the error of the self-supporting theory is at once apparent; and, with the liberal scale of rations and the plentiful supply of clothing and bedding granted to prisoners in this colony, as compared with the English prisons, the cost of maintenance must be admitted to be reasonable: while the keeping-open of