

hauled and repaired. The Matron's quarters have been put in repair; this necessitated several new piles, flooring-joists, and weather-boards. The roof and a portion of the wood-work received a coat of oil-paint, the fence was repaired, and on the unfenced boundary a fence has been erected. At the Gaoler's quarters, new entrance-gates have been made and put in place, a small wash-house erected, the tumble-down out-offices put into thorough repair, and the major portion of the flooring of verandah taken up and renewed. A bathroom has also been fitted up with bath and washstand, and connections for water-supply made.

The supply of firewood for the year for the Prison and officers' quarters has been cut and carted from the bush by prisoners, and has entailed a considerable amount of labour. The female prisoners have been fully occupied in keeping their quarters clean and in order, and in washing and repairing prison clothing.

The prison buildings, boundary-walls, and officers' quarters are now in a fair state of repair; the Gaoler's and more especially the Matron's quarters, however, should shortly be painted.

The revised prison regulations, *re* classification, which came into force within the prisons of the colony on the 1st April last, were favourably received and commented on by the prisoners. The privilege of writing and receiving letters more frequently than heretofore was especially taken advantage of by them and their friends. Speculation was, for a time, rife amongst prisoners serving sentences of four and three years, and who were convicted prior to the date of the regulations coming into force, as to whether Regulation No. 155, entailing the special month's remission for good conduct and industry to fourteen and seven days respectively, applied to them, until their doubts were set at rest by the department in reply to a question on the subject put by one of their number to the Hon. Minister of Justice on his visiting the Prison in May last.

In conclusion, I beg to bear testimony to the assistance rendered me by the several officers.

First Offenders' Probation Act.

Of the working of "The First Offenders' Probation Act, 1886," I have but little to report. At the commencement of the year one probationer only was on the register of this district. He, a confirmed dipsomaniac, gave some considerable trouble at times in ascertaining his whereabouts, which for some months was only known to me when he was in the custody of the police, or undergoing a sentence of imprisonment in this Prison. Four convictions for drunkenness were recorded against him in as many months, carrying sentences in the aggregate to some fifteen weeks' imprisonment. He was also in arrears with the payments towards the costs of prosecution, £7. The probationist was simply a hard and hopeless case. At the criminal sittings of the Supreme Court held on the 30th September last he was charged with having failed to comply or conduct himself in a manner consistent with the conditions of his release under the Act, pleaded guilty, and was sentenced to two years' hard labour. He had pleaded guilty at the Hokitika Supreme Court, on the 20th March, 1899, to two charges of forgery, and by his Honour the Judge placed on probation for two years, and ordered to pay towards the costs of prosecution the sum of £15, in monthly instalments of £1.

During the year none have been placed on probation at the Courts of this district. At the end of the year one remained on the books—a transfer from Greymouth—who is satisfactorily carrying out the conditions of his license.

T. R. POINTON,
Gaoler and Probation Officer.

INVERCARGILL PRISON.

The general conduct and industry of the prisoners has been very good. One prisoner, sentenced to fourteen days' hard labour, who was unwell when received, was sent to the Hospital; with that exception there has been no sickness in the Prison. During the year five prisoners were punished for ten minor offences. Two escaped from the works at the Hospital, but were recaptured after two days. Rations were very good; no complaints. Conduct and efficiency of the officers very good. Prison in good order, except padded cell, which requires repairing. Everything else perfectly clean and satisfactory.

First Offenders' Probation Act.

Five persons were placed on probation during the year. Four were transferred to other districts; the remaining one is carrying out the conditions of his license. One probationer was received from another district, and discharged after satisfactorily carrying out the conditions of his license.

J. H. BRATBY,
Gaoler and Probation Officer.

LYTTLETON PRISON.

The number of prisoners received was 553, discharged 532, being only one less than the number received, leaving in custody at the end of the year 89 males and 14 females, a total of 103. Included in the number received were 17 males and 2 females sent here for medical treatment. Two males died—one in the Prison hospital two days after his admission; the other in the Christchurch Hospital, being sent to that institution from the Prison as soon as he gained sufficient strength to warrant his removal. However, he died four days after his admission. Inquests were held on each. The verdict of the jury on the man who died in the Prison was, "That deceased died from kidney disease, accelerated by excessive drinking." The verdict on the man who died in the Hospital was as follows: "Deceased died at the Christchurch Hospital of cirrhosis of the liver, caused by chronic alcoholism." The jury added a rider, "That in their opinion every care was taken of deceased by the Gaol authorities, and that there should be proper facilities provided in the Christchurch Hospital for the treatment of such cases, instead of their being sent to the Gaol."