

rations I might say that the tradesmen here, or at least some of them, have evidently an understanding between themselves as to who shall tender for supplies to the Prison and who shall not. For instance, the only tender received for meat was at 5d. per ration. This is at the rate of 7d. per pound. This, I consider, an extortionate price. I afterwards interviewed some of the other local retail butchers to try and induce some of them to tender, but they very politely declined; in fact, one of them admitted to me that he did not care to supply the Prison with meat even as an ordinary customer, let alone to tender for it. The same applies to the chemists; not one of them sent in a tender, although they were all invited to do so. During the ensuing year, however, I hope to arrange for a supply of medicines from Wellington, and before next December the local chemists may think better of it.

The conduct of the officers during the year has been good.

There were in custody at the close of the year eighteen hard-labour prisoners and one awaiting trial. No females.

The Inspector of Prisons, Wellington.

I have, &c.,

B. L. O'BRIEN, Gaoler.

WAIOTAPU PRISON.

SIR,—

H.M. Prison, Waiotapu, 28th March, 1902.

I have the honour to forward this the first annual report of the prison established at Waiotapu for first offenders. I arrived at Rotorua on the 12th January, 1901, on transfer from Wellington Prison, remained in Rotorua, receiving and forwarding to Waiotapu the huts, stores, &c., which arrived there, until the 31st. The Prison was opened on the 1st February, 1901, four prisoners arriving from Auckland Prison on that date; the remainder of the men (twenty-one) arrived on the 22nd February.

The men were employed until the 1st March putting the Camp in order and doing necessary work about the place. In March the real work commenced, the following being a general description:—

Fencing.—About ten miles of wire fence was erected, the whole length being chipped half a chain each side to prevent fire from injuring fence. The fence is built with six wires, 7 gauge, six and a half posts to a chain, with heavy strainers at suitable distances.

Planting.—Around the line of fencing the following trees and shrubs were planted as a fire-screen for the forest trees to be planted later on: Berberry, 11,455; *Cordyline australis*, 8,514; Pittosporum, 9,073; *Cupressa lawsoniana*, 9,200; birch, 20,280; *Pinus laricio*, 5,285; *P. benthamiana*, 5,162; Spanish broom, 282; Laburnum, 114. Lined in for planting this year: Birch, 5,780; *benthamiana*, 1,662. Total, 76,807.

Paths.—All the existing paths were repaired and put in good order, also about 20 chains of new paths opened—about 605 chains in all.

Roads formed.—A road 97 chains long and 12 ft. wide was formed through the reserve from Mud Volcano to the Kerosene Creek, planted each side with *lawsoniana* 6 ft. apart; also a road from the Camp to new road to Galatea, 20 chains long by half a chain wide.

Sheep-paddock.—A paddock for sheep was fenced in and drained in the swamp above the Camp, 14½ acres. The sowing of grass-seed was delayed through a bad burn-off, as the fires were lit before the place was dry enough to burn well.

Vegetable-garden.—The small swamp on the river-bank near the Camp is now drained and fenced with hare-proof wire netting. Black soil was brought to it from the small gullies close by, and I hope to grow enough vegetables in future to supply the Prison all the year round.

Clearing Scrub.—All scrub and tea-tree must be cleared and burnt before pitting can be commenced. Amount cleared to date, 85 acres.

Pitting for Planting.—The number of pits dug for this year's tree-planting will be, to the end of March, about 209,748. The average number of pits dug per day is about 480 to 500 per man.

The Camp.—The Camp is situated on the east bank of the Waiotapu Stream, of which the men take full advantage for bathing, numerous hot streams flowing into it making the water warm enough to bathe in all the year round. Right on the edge of the stream are two hot sulphur baths, in which the men bathe during the winter months. The grounds about the Camp are cleared and planted with shrubs and flowers, which, when in bloom, will do much to increase the attraction of the place. About a quarter of a mile from the Camp is the Venus Bath, which is admitted to be the prettiest and best in the whole thermal district.

Health of Prisoners.—The health of prisoners has been most satisfactory, no medical attendance being necessary (with the exception of one prisoner, who suffered from the effects of an accident met with in Lyttelton Prison previous to his transfer here).

Conduct.—The general conduct of prisoners has been excellent. There were no punishments or reports during the year. They realise that obedience of orders is essential to their welfare, and they perform their work cheerfully and well, giving satisfaction to the Chief Forester, Mr. Matthews, to whom I am greatly indebted for his assistance and co-operation in making this our first year's labour so successful.

Officers.—The conduct of officers has been good. They have been steady, and took an interest in the various works upon which they were engaged. By studying the habits and temper of the men they were able to control and direct them in the most satisfactory manner.

Rations.—Owing to the great distance from a town the rations had to be obtained in bulk from Auckland, the contractor giving complete satisfaction. The bread obtained from Rotorua has been very good, and no complaints of the quality or quantity were made by prisoners during the year. The meat, chiefly mutton, is supplied locally by the Maoris, and is a heavy item in our expenditure; but when the paddock is ready for sheep I hope to reduce the cost considerably.