

WELLINGTON PRISON.

SIR,—

Terrace Prison, Wellington, 28th January, 1902.

I have the honour to report that, during the year 1901, the conduct and industry of the prisoners have been good. There were only two males and one female prisoner put on bread and water during the year for prison offences.

Of sickness there has been practically nil. It will be found, however, on reference to the financial return, that the cost of medicines and medical comforts is again very high at this Prison; but the Prison Surgeon's recommendations are invariably given effect to, and he alone is responsible for the medical expenses. From October last, however, there has been a very large reduction in medical comforts, and probably at the end of the present year this item will be as small as, if not less than, at any other prison in the colony. Tobacco should not be classed as a medical comfort, and I would recommend a little to be allowed to certain class prisoners under the most exacting rules.

The prisoners were employed at brick and pipe making and at various works on the fortifications, and at repairing the rifle-ranges. They worked, on the whole, very well.

The rations were of good quality,

The conduct of the officers has been good; only one has been penalised.

The practice of sending persons suffering from the effects of drink to the Prison still continues, much to the detriment of the quiet of the Prison, and certainly not to the best advantage of the individuals themselves.

Six prisoners escaped from the Prison works during the year, but there were no cases of prison-breaking. All were recaptured; five were dealt with at the Stipendiary Magistrate's Court and one at the Supreme Court. In the case of two of these escapes the officer on sentry duty was found, owing to age and infirmities, unfit for further prison duty, and retired on the usual compensation. Two of the prisoners escaped from the Mount Cook Prison works, and the other four from the Point Halswell fortification-works. I am of opinion that as long as prisoners are employed at isolated places like Point Halswell, where working parties are divided, escapes must periodically occur.

I am glad that steps are being taken to erect a new wing of separate cells at this Prison. The new road by which bricks, &c., are to be conveyed on to the ground is being pushed on, and will soon be complete. It is to be hoped that the building of new wing will be pushed on with all possible speed. I am of opinion that the work should be done by contract, the Department supplying bricks, cement, doors, and windows, and the necessary prison labour for excavation.

The Probation Act continues to give satisfaction. Some slight amendments may be necessary in time; but, considering that it has worked satisfactorily for sixteen years, I would be slow to recommend any alteration to an Act such as this, which has made its mark on the statute-book of the colony.

Yours, &c.,

The Inspector of Prisons, Wellington.

P. S. GARVEY, Gaoler.