

that he was released on six months' probation. On reception here, however, he was recognised by one of the officers who had known him in one of the South Island prisons; and, on looking up the *Police Gazette*, I was astonished to find that the man had no less than fourteen previous convictions recorded against him. This only goes to prove how careful one requires to be before recommending probation.

B. S. O'BRIEN, Gaoler.

WAIOTAPU PRISON.

I HAVE the honour to forward this the second annual report of this Prison.

The year just closed was very satisfactory, the work done by prisoners being good and to the entire satisfaction of the Forester in charge of the tree-planting.

A sufficient area being cleared and pitted during the summer, planting commenced on the 4th June, and continued to the 26th September. From the 11th November to the 26th December 83,121 *Eucalyptus coriacea* (blue-gum) seeds, in plots, were sown on the tops of the hills between the Camp and Galatea Road. On the flat, extending from Prison Road to fence beyond Kerosene Creek: *Pinus ponderosa*, 56,253; *Pinus laricio*, 30,384; *Pinus strobus*, 8,686; alder, 1,936; *Pinus austriaca*, 166,431; *Abies douglasii*, 11,122; Spanish broom, 505; *Piptanthus nepaulensis*, 175; Lombardy poplars, 3,950; *Cupressus lawsoniana*, 1,996; *Pinus benthamiana*, 481; *Cordyline australis*, 201; pampas-grass, 146; mountain ash, 5,254; birch, 4,792: total, 295,390.

Clearing and burning off scrub before pitting for the plants: Amount cleared, 170 acres 3 roods 34 perches. All scrub is grubbed out by the roots. The number of pits dug for planting at 4 ft. apart was 301,893. The river by the Camp being choked with snags and toitoi, a number of men were employed in clearing the worst places, and thus enabling the water to flow freely. A road was formed through the reserve to Kerosene Creek, and a party is now employed forming another road to connect with Galatea Road on the western side of the Waiotapu River. The paddock above the Camp is now finished, and partly sown in grass. The very dry season has not been favourable to plant's or seeds. The small swamp near the Camp is now drained, and fenced with wire netting to keep out the hares, which are numerous and very destructive in the winter, when feed outside the plantation is scarce. We have grown all vegetables used for rations, and from present appearances the supply can be depended upon.

The health of prisoners is still good, and, with the exception of medical attendance for two accidents—one caused by a prisoner going too close to a wild horse when bogged, one the result of an old injury—there was no expenditure for medical aid or medicines.

The general conduct of prisoners was good, there being no punishments and few reports. The removal of two men to Auckland Prison had a good effect in checking grumbling caused by being required to work in damp weather during the planting season.

The conduct of the officers during the year has been good, they being steady, and carrying out their various duties in a satisfactory manner.

It being decided to increase the number of prisoners, the work of preparing the Camp for the extra huts for their accommodation was proceeded with; and, all being ready, the huts were sent out from Newmarket by train to Rotorua, and from there by wagon to the Camp, where they were put in position, and are ready for use. The extra cell-furniture, mattresses, &c., were made in Auckland Prison.

J. C. SCANLON,

Principal Warder and Acting-Gaoler.

WANGANUI PRISON.

THE number of prisoners received during the year was—males 161, females 14, total 175; as against 193 males and 15 females, total 208, last year; being a decrease of 32 males and 1 female. During the year 163 males and 13 females were discharged. On the 1st January, 1902, there were in custody 20 males and no females; on the 31st December the males numbered 19 and the females 1. The daily average throughout the year was 16.84 males, 1 female: total average, 17.84.

The conduct of the prisoners on the whole was good, but as generally happens there were one or two very bad men who caused a lot of trouble, but these generally managed to keep clear themselves, making the bullets for the more ignorant and less criminal prisoners to fire.

The prisoners have worked exceedingly well, and not one case of idleness at work has been reported through the year; but the best proof of the way they have worked is to be found in the quantity and quality of the work done in Cook's Gardens, and except for necessary work about the Prison this has been their work throughout the year.

The health of the prisoners has been exceedingly good, there having been practically no sickness in the Prison except what was imported; and although the daily average was slightly over 1, this was made up by one prisoner transferred from another prison, and who was sick for over six months, and a woman received for three months with a bad arm, and who was just cured as she went out; a third case was that of a man who served two sentences of one month and two months, and was practically on the sick-list all the time, and there were the usual number of sick drunkards.

The rations have been excellent, and there have been no complaints except once, when the baker was trying to work off stale and sour bread, but this was promptly stopped, and he complained to the Minister without avail.

There have been several changes in the staff, and I am glad to say that another warder has been added to the strength. The conduct of the staff has been good, and although the two juniors have not been long in the service I had no reason to find fault with either their conduct or efficiency, whilst the Senior Warder, who replaced an officer retired through ill health, has proved of great assistance to us in improving the discipline and general character of the Prison.