

The First Offenders' Probation Act.

There is nothing new to report under this heading. Twenty-five males and 5 females have been placed on probation, some of whom are conducting themselves in a satisfactory manner, while in others the reverse is the case. One has absconded, and one has been rearrested for failing to comply with the order of Court. One woman, transferred from another district (not included in above number), died.

FRAS. EGERTON SEVERNE,
Gaoler and Probation Officer.

DUNEDIN PRISON.

H.M. Prison, Dunedin, 30th January, 1904.

I took charge of the Prison on the 1st April, on transfer from Invercargill.

Received during the year, 355 males and 60 females.

The rations supplied by the contractors have been of a good quality. No complaints.

Six convicted prisoners were sent to the Lunatic Asylum; in every case they showed symptoms of insanity when received into the Prison. The sentences of five out of the six have expired in the Asylum; there still remains one unexpired sentence in that institution.

The health of the prisoners has been very good; there was one death. This man was sick and weak when received into prison, suffering from tubercular meningitis, from which he died. One prisoner was sent to the hospital through an accident to his right eye while stonebreaking at the Heads. After a stay of two months he was discharged convalescent.

The majority of the prisoners continue to be employed at Taiaroa Heads, excavating, forming the ground for a searchlight, stonebreaking, &c. I paid weekly visits to the Heads; complaints were few and trivial.

The conduct of the prisoners has been good; only 6 prisoners were punished during the year—4 for seven minor offences, and 2 for aggravated offences. In every case those punished were old offenders, with a bad prison record.

There was one escape from the working-party at Harrington Point, Taiaroa Heads. The police, artillery, and settlers gave every assistance to effect his recapture. The bush was frequently searched, and all outlets on the Peninsula were watched night and day for a fortnight without success. The new cottage built at the Heads is now occupied by the officer in charge, which is an improvement on the old order of things.

In accordance with your instructions, the finger-prints of prisoners were taken in this Prison in connection with the system of identification.

The discipline staff consists of 1 Chief Warder, 2 Principal Warders, 1 Acting Principal Warder, 9 Warders, 1 Matron, and 1 Assistant Matron. During the year 6 were transferred to other prisons, 1 dismissed, 1 retired, and 1 resigned; 5 were received on transfer from other prisons, and 4 others were appointed in their places. The conduct of the staff has been good, with one exception (whose services were dispensed with). One warder was retired through ill health, being unfit for further prison service.

Every Sunday Divine service is held at the Prison, also at Taiaroa Heads—Protestants in the forenoon, Roman Catholics in the afternoon. Messrs. Torrance and Axelson, Chaplains, frequently visit the Prison, and are very assiduous in helping discharged prisoners to make a fresh start in life. Thanks are due to Messrs. Edgar and Miller, who kindly give their services every alternate Sunday as organists. Thanks are also due to George Gray Russell, Esq., J.P., per Mr. Torrance, for the gift of £3 to purchase new books for the Prison library, which has been done, and is very much appreciated.

During the year, Robert Ewing, Esq., J.P., was appointed a Visiting Justice to the Prison. It is with regret that I have to allude to the death of E. B. Cargill, Esq., who has officiated as Visiting Justice at this Prison since 1871.

The First Offenders' Probation Act.

On the 1st January, 1903, there were 4 prisoners on probation; 3 were received on transfer from other districts; 10 were committed during the year. Six were transferred to other districts, and 5 discharged, leaving 6 probationers at the end of the year.

J. H. BRATBY,
Gaoler and Probation Officer.

HANMER SPRINGS PRISON.

H.M. Prison, Hanmer Springs.

REPORT on the working of this Prison from the 5th September to the 31st December, 1903:—

The prisoners were employed placing the huts in position and doing necessary work in connection with the camp till the 21st September, on which date tree-planting commenced and continued till the 26th October, the total number of trees planted being 128,560.

The following work has also been carried out: Cleared 4 miles 19 chains of fire-break 12 ft. wide, and 22 acres of scrub; formed 38 chains of road to nursery; prepared nursery for lining out trees; constructed fifty-two seed-protecting frames; erected a blacksmith's shop and an addition to the kitchen; dug 4,540 pits for trees.

The conduct of the prisoners has been good.

There have been several minor cases of sickness, and one man mentally afflicted was transferred back to Lyttelton Prison.

The officers have carried out their duties in a satisfactory manner.

A. W. ROBERTS,
Principal Warder and Acting-Gaoler.