

HOKITIKA PRISON.

H.M. Prison, Hokitika, 23rd January, 1904.

On the 1st January, 1903, the numbers in the Prison were—Males, 21; females, 2: total, 23. The admissions during the year have been—Males, 40; females, 9: total, 49. Total number dealt with—Males, 61; females, 11. The discharges during the same period have been—Males, 41; females, 9: total, 50. The number in custody on the 31st ultimo—Males, 20; females, 2: total, 22. The daily average during the year was—Males, 21·34; females, 1·72; and of both sexes, 23·06: an increase of 6·14 on the 1902 average.

It may be gratifying to state that of the prisoners received only a few were born in New Zealand, the majority hailing from the United Kingdom.

With a few exceptions the conduct and industry of prisoners has been good. Five prisoners, for repeated acts of misconduct, were awarded secondary punishment by the Visiting Justices.

Two Visiting Justices were appointed during the year. I much regret to have to record the death of one of them—Mr. Duncan Macfarlane, S.M.—which took place a few months after his appointment.

The health of prisoners generally has been good. Two men, thorough weeds, suffering from general debility were on the sick-list, one for forty and the other for thirty-three days. In the case of a third man, suffering from retention of urine, it was found necessary, in consequence of the Gaol Surgeon's inability to pass catheters, to aspirate the bladder above pubes. Chloroform was administered, and the operation was performed in the presence of a second medical practitioner. The operation was very successful, the prisoner being enabled to resume work a few days thereafter.

The successful tenderers for rations and other supplies to the Prison fulfilled the conditions of their contracts satisfactorily. There were no complaints from prisoners.

The transfer of two officers from this to other prisons took place during the year. One officer was transferred hither, and a second posted to this Prison on appointment as probationary warder. Conduct of officers good.

Prisoners during the year have been employed in keeping the grounds around the Police Camp, Customhouse, Supreme and Magistrate's Court; and a lot of work has been done on the Prison Reserve in procuring a supply of firewood for Prison use. The Prison garden has been very productive during the year, and supplied ample vegetables, &c., for the prisoners' use; keeping it in order also entailed a large amount of labour. A large concrete water-tank for fire-prevention purposes has been made, and is a very creditable piece of work, notwithstanding that unskilled labour was employed.

The prisoners' spiritual welfare has been attended to. The clergymen of the various denominations have visited those prisoners belonging to their congregations, and at all times had free access to them. His Lordship the Bishop of Christchurch, and the Ven. Archdeacon Harper, Timaru, during their periodical visits to this portion of the diocese paid their customary visit to this institution, held Divine service, and conversed with prisoners.

The First Offenders' Probation Act.

Number of probationers on register at the beginning of the year, nil. Number of persons admitted to probation during the year, nil.

F. R. POINTON.
Gaoler and Probation Officer.

INVERCARGILL PRISON.

H.M. Prison, Invercargill, 28th January, 1904.

MR. AND MRS. BRATBY were relieved by self and wife as Gaoler and Matron respectively on the 30th March.

Received during the year, 126 males and 15 females; total, 141.

Remaining in custody at the end of the year, 21 males, 1 female; total, 22.

Three males were received for lunacy, and discharged to police after remand. One male awaiting trial was found to be insane, and transferred to the Lunatic Asylum.

The conduct of the prisoners, with two exceptions, was good.

The health of the prisoners was excellent. A paralytic sentenced to three months' hard labour was unable to do it or anything else. He had to be included in sick-list, which tends to enlarge the percentage.

Eight prisoners were punished for eleven minor offences. One prisoner, for an aggravated prison offence, received six months' hard labour in addition to sentence now serving. He savagely assaulted the officer in charge of the working-party while he (the officer) was endeavouring to rescue a fellow-prisoner from his brutal treatment. In this affair another prisoner rendered prompt assistance to the officer, and helped to secure the offender; and I am happy to be able to state that his service on that occasion has been rewarded by a special remission of three months of his sentence.

At the request of the prisoners, and by permission, a change in the ration-scale from A to B was made, fresh tenders being called for, and the same contractor being the successful tenderer. The quality of the rations was good throughout, and the regulations regarding them were strictly observed.

The conduct and efficiency of the officers was very good.

The dilapidated state of the old Prison, outbuildings, and iron fence, not to mention the objectionable necessity of having to put more than one prisoner in a cell, makes it necessary that the new prison should be built without delay. To this end the prisoners have been employed in constructing drains, excavating, and in reclaiming the lower portion of the new Prison ground, which was practically a swamp, but about an acre and a half of which is now a kitchen-garden,