

The conduct of the prisoners was good—only eleven punishments.

The health of the prisoners was good. Influenza was responsible for most of the sickness. There were several cases of helpless drunkenness, but after the usual remands all were turned out cured. Dr. Moore has been very successful in his treatment of those unfortunates. One man was received for attempted suicide and was sent to Napier Hospital; the hospital authorities engaged two men from the Home to watch him night and day at the expense of the Prisons Department. Another man was brought to the prison in a conveyance, but he looked so ill that I sent for the gaol surgeon, who ordered his removal to hospital at once, where he died one hour after he was received.

The rations were good, but towards the end of the year the potatoes were so bad that rice and peas were supplied in lieu.

The prisoners have been employed quarrying and stone-breaking. The old Asylum has been pulled down, and two neat cottages built by the prisoners for warders out of the material; this will mean a saving of £60 a year to the Government.

The officers have done their duty in a very satisfactory manner. One officer had to retire on account of bad health.

Divine service has been held every Sunday.

The state of this prison has been very satisfactory during the year.

FIRST OFFENDERS' PROBATION ACT.

On the 1st January, 1907, there were 5 probationers reporting themselves at this prison: 4 have satisfactorily finished their terms, 1 committed suicide. Nine males and 2 females have been placed on probation during 1907, and 1 probationer was transferred from another district. Thanks are due to the police of this district for their assistance in carrying out the Probation Act.

MICHAEL FLANNERY,

The Inspector of Prisons, Wellington.

Gaoler and Probation Officer.

NEW PLYMOUTH PRISON.

H.M. Prison, New Plymouth, 13th January, 1908.

THERE were in custody at the commencement of the year, 32 hard-labour males and 2 awaiting trial; no females. Received during the year, 119 males and 3 females. Twenty of the males were merely passing through to the different tree-planting stations: leaving in custody at the end of the year, 24 hard-labour and 1 habitual criminal, male; no females.

The conduct of the prisoners throughout the year has been good. There was one escape from the works outside the prison. The escapee was speedily recaptured.

The general health of the prisoners has been excellent. There was one admission to the district hospital during the year, an operation being considered necessary. The man was, on the recommendation of the prison surgeon, removed to the hospital, where the operation was performed successfully, and the man is now quite well.

The rations throughout the year have been good, the fresh vegetables supplied from the prison-garden being much appreciated.

During the first four months of the year a party of prisoners was employed at Western Park. The Western Park Committee, however, being out of funds and unable to keep up their payments (£10 per month), the prisoners were, at the Committee's request, withdrawn.

The prisoners have since been employed digging drains to connect the prison with the town sewerage. The trenches are now completed, but I regret to say that the connecting is not yet done. This part of the work is under the control of the Public Works Department, and I would urgently request that the work be completed as soon as possible, so as to put the prison in a thoroughly sanitary condition.

A party of men has also been employed removing the hill at the eastern side of the Gaoler's residence. The Lands and Survey Department kindly agreed to allow the hill to be taken away, which will be a great benefit to the Gaoler's quarters.

A party of prisoners have several times during the year been employed working on Marsland Hill, but I regret to say that I have not sufficient men to spare to keep it as it should be kept.

The new cottage which was in course of erection at the close of last year has now been completed, and is occupied by the Principal Warder. It is thoroughly up to date. One of the old cottages has been thoroughly renovated and an additional room added. Another of the old cottages has been taken down, giving more ground to the one it adjoined. It is proposed to build one to replace it.

During the year the west wing was gazetted a prison for habitual criminals. Three new cells and a bath-room were erected of ferro-concrete, as was also a large workroom 30 ft. by 15 ft. The four old cells were altered to suit requirements. The wing will now accommodate seven prisoners, and is quite distinct from the rest of the prison. There is only one occupant at present, and he is employed making mats.

There are also considerable alterations being carried out in the female division. The windows of the female cells have been closed up, and the cells lighted by skylights. A new wash-house has also been erected, and the old concrete bath is to be replaced by an enamel one. A condemned-cell and two punishment-cells are also in course of erection in the male division, as well as one punishment-cell in the female division. A padded cell has been added to the male division in the south wing. Having had to deal with 11 male and 2 female lunatics during the year, it will be seen that this cell was urgently needed, the old concrete one being quite unfit for the purpose, particularly as several of the male lunatics were very violent.

A new carpenters', blacksmiths', bootmakers', and matmakers' shop has been erected to replace the old one, which was in a very dilapidated condition.