

and 2 were still in the institution when the year closed. Touching the three deaths above noted, the usual inquest on the body of each was held, and verdicts of "Death from pulmonary tuberculosis," "natural causes," and "alcoholic poisoning" were returned by the jury in the respective cases, in accordance with the medical testimony. Six males were transferred to the Mental Hospital at Avondale.

The meat and other rations supplied by the contractors were of excellent quality, as also were the supplies of other articles and material received for prison use from the various successful tenderers; complaints from prisoners were therefore reduced to the minimum.

The conduct of the prisoners generally was very good during the year. Disciplinary punishment for breaches of the regulations was meted out to 18 male prisoners, 16 being charged with minor, and 2 with aggravated prison offences.

Prisoners, with a few exceptions, worked well and gave satisfaction. They were employed, as in former years, quarrying and dressing stone for prison-building purposes, &c. Some of the principal building operations and alterations made were—Finishing terrace and area-wall between the new offices and west wing, and building flight of steps leading to boiler-house in basement of south wing; erecting one cottage of six rooms (married officers' quarters) exclusively by prison labour; removing circular stone stairs under Octagon Tower, covering up well-hole with concrete floor, prison lights, and circular iron ventilators, the whole being supported by steel girders resting on a new-built wall and iron pillars; cutting fresh well-hole abutting on new office wall and erecting new staircase to basement in lieu of circular stairs, and closing in side with masonry and iron plates; removing the old office and orderly-room building to a fresh site to enable the erection of west wing and towers; removing the hard-labour yard boundary-fence and encompassing the building operations with a new palisade; erecting two sanitary timber cells in one of the awaiting-trial yards; excavating for and putting in and completing the foundations of west wing and towers, also a portion of the south wing to the level of ground floors, and laying down concrete flooring over the whole space. Good progress was made with the west wing and towers, the walls of the former being carried to a height of 11 ft. from ground-level, and the latter to a height of 15 ft. from basement. Two courses of stone were laid down on portion of south wing, and one course on both sides of the corridor of west wing. Many other small works were carried out, including the erection and fitting-up of a blacksmith's shop in the quarry, lime-washing and painting prison throughout, &c. Prisoners employed in the shops have done good work at the respective trades, and to my entire satisfaction. Female prisoners have been fully employed as hitherto at laundry and needlework, cleaning, &c. The 30 prisoners stationed at the Fort Cautley Prison throughout the year were employed on the fortifications, erecting new magazine and stores, gun-pits, &c., and have made good headway with the work. A much-appreciated gift of books, some three hundred volumes, was received with thanks from His Worship the Mayor of Newmarket, Ernest Davis, Esq.: this, with an occasional small donation of a similar kind from the friends of prisoners, to whom thanks are also due, made a splendid addition to the prison library.

There were no reports recorded against the members of the subordinate staff.

THE FIRST OFFENDERS' PROBATION ACT.

On the register at this office on the 1st January, 1909, there were 26 probationers—24 males and 2 females. At the local Courts during the year 22 males and 2 females were placed on probation, and 6 males and 1 female were transferred from other districts, making a total of 57 of both sexes dealt with. For the same period 15 males and 2 females completed their terms satisfactorily; 11 males were transferred to other districts; 3 males for the commission of fresh offences and breaches of the Act, were sentenced to terms of imprisonment; 1 absconded; and 1—his term of probation being a short one—by special permit left the the Dominion with his wife and family.

The Under-Secretary for Justice, Wellington.

T. R. POINTON,
Gaoler and Probation Officer.

DUNEDIN PRISON.

H.M. Prison, Dunedin, 14th January, 1910.

I HAVE the honour to forward annual returns for this prison for year 1909.

I was transferred from the prison at Wanganui, and took charge here on the 9th April, *vice* Mr. J. H. Bratby, retired in accordance with the Public Service Superannuation Act, 1907.

There were 39 males and 7 females in custody at the commencement of the year, 327 males and 63 females were received, and 306 males and 60 females were discharged, leaving 60 males and 10 females in custody at end of year. Of prisoners received, the actual numbers were 285 males and 45 females, 36 males and 11 females having been received twice or more, as shown in remarks, Return No. 1.

There has been a considerable diminution in the number of males received, 327, as against 417 last year, a very satisfactory showing.

The conduct of prisoners has been good, consequently there has been few punishments, one man only being dealt with by the Visiting Justice for a minor prison offence. One man escaped from Taiaroa Heads Prison in March, but was recaptured soon afterwards, brought before the Supreme Court, and sentenced to twelve months' hard labour, additional to his former sentence.