

officers. The building is quite up to date, and will compare more than favourably with any other prison in the Dominion, and, with the alterations and improvements introduced into its construction by the present administration, should afford a splendid opportunity for giving effect to reformatory methods of treatment. It would certainly have been quite impossible to give effect to such methods in the old prison, which is quite unsuited for such purposes, besides being in such a state of decay that it would not have stood much longer, and was fast becoming unsafe. Negotiations are at present proceeding between the Prisons Department and the Borough Council with a view to utilising prison labour in reclaiming a portion of the estuary to the extent of 2,250 acres, the Borough Council to find all plant and materials required, the Prisons Department on their part to provide all the necessary labour, and, on completion of the work, to receive an area of 650 acres immediately opposite the new prison, the same to be in one block.

During the year a concrete-block making plant has been installed, and orders are already coming in freely. This will prove a very profitable industry, and provide a means of employment for boys. I hope that before long a cement-pipe making plant will be added to this industry. The Public Works and Railway Departments could easily use the whole of the output. A railway siding on the Gaol Reserve provides the means of bringing in the raw material, and also taking away for distribution the finished product without entailing the expenditure of a single penny outside the Departments concerned, and at the same time providing a means of employing a considerable number of youths at useful and remunerative work.

Market-gardening operations have been continued during the year, but I very much regret that, owing to the new building requiring almost the whole of the labour at my disposal, I was unable to give this very important branch of industry the attention it deserved. The fact, however, remains that vegetables actually produced and sold amounted to a cash value of £275, the sum of £222 having been paid into the Public Account, with a balance of £53 to be collected, as December is usually our best month. This represents the labour of three boys and one elderly man, none of whom would be able to do a heavy day's work at any other employment. The total expenditure on manure, seeds, and delivery of produce amounted to the sum of £45, thus leaving a net profit of £230 on the year's working. I have always maintained that market-gardening, as providing a means of employment for prisoners, cannot be surpassed, more especially as it provides a healthy means of employment, and also highly remunerative, for a class of prisoners that at any other form of employment would be of little service. Old men and youths physically incapable of performing a hard day's work can here be employed advantageously, and almost any person can hoe and weed and look after growing crops. By this means, also, men's time which would otherwise be lost is saved, and the danger of physical and moral deterioration consequent upon unsuitable employment is prevented.

During the latter part of the year you have been pleased to order the transfer of a number of boys to this prison, with a recommendation that provision be made for their improvement educationally. I have accordingly endeavoured to carry out your instructions, and have established evening classes at which youths are given an opportunity for mental improvement. The experiment, although carried out under difficulties, has proved very successful: the boys have eagerly taken advantage of the opportunity offered for improvement, and a spirit of friendly rivalry as to who should make the most progress has been the result; and, as the youths are given to understand that any act of misconduct will entail their being deprived for a time of the opportunity of attending the classes, this fact has a marked effect, and acts as a restraining influence on, their general behaviour. In this connection I must acknowledge my very great indebtedness to Mr. Kayll, who, when a youth is sent to me, furnishes me with a report outlining in what respect the youth may be deficient, and pointing out the best manner in which the said deficiency may be remedied. By this means I can almost at once determine what class of treatment will best meet the case. This work can be extended and carried out under much better conditions when the new prison is occupied.

Divine service has been conducted regularly every Sunday by Ministers of the various denominations, assisted by the City Missionary, Mr. McLean, and Mr. James Crawford. Every prisoner is met on discharge by Mr. McLean (who represents the Prisoners' Aid Society). Work is found for every man or woman who wants it, also clothing and board and lodging arranged for where necessary. In this respect Mr. McLean is doing a really good work, and both himself and the society are deserving of support. At no time does a prisoner more need assistance and advice than at time of discharge, and many have again lapsed into crime for want of a helping hand.

There were 5 males and 1 female on probation at the beginning of the year, and during the year 2 males were placed on probation, all of whom completed the term of their probation satisfactorily. I have again to thank Inspector Mitchell for his valuable assistance in the matter of obtaining information on which to base my reports, and enabling me to keep in touch with probationers in outlying districts.

The Under-Secretary for Justice, Wellington.

M. HAWKINS,
Gaoler and Probation Officer.

LYTTELTON PRISON.

H.M. Prison, Lyttelton, 12th January, 1910.

I took charge of this prison on the 10th April, 1909, on transfer from the prison at Hokitika.

There were in custody at the commencement of the year 128 males and 7 females; 522 males and 75 females were received, being a decrease of 49 males and an increase of 7 females on previous