

The health of prisoners has been good, few cases of illness occurring in the prison, but there were several prisoners received from Court who were under medical treatment during the whole of their sentences. Two males and 1 female were sick during the whole of their sentences of three months; 1 male was sent to the district hospital for treatment, and was returned cured. Two females were received from Invercargill and were transferred to the Mental Hospital at Seacliff. There were 19 prisoners received from the Magistrate's Court on remand for medical treatment for drunkenness, and were attended to by the prison surgeon.

The conduct of prisoners has been good, only 4 cases for minor breaches of discipline being dealt with by the Visiting Justices. One aggravated offence was dealt with in the Magistrate's Court. The offender in this case had been received on transfer from another prison so that he could have a specialist to treat an alleged complaint (loss of sight). After examination the specialist reported that the prisoner was malingering, and he was accordingly charged with this offence. On being found guilty he was punished. Since then his conduct has been very good.

At Taiaroa Heads the prisoners were employed at work for the Defence Department excavating for a magazine and completing the pits and platforms for the two 12-pounder Q.F. guns. One gun is now mounted and was recently tested, the foundations, &c., standing the strain satisfactorily.

In the town prison matmaking is the chief industry, and the increasing demand by the public for our mats is ample testimony as to their quality. In this respect I think greater advantage should be taken by other Government Departments to obtain mats from the prisons. The prices should be no bar, as the prison-made mats are infinitely superior to any other in the market, and the cost of material is all the Treasury would have to pay for. Employment is also found in keeping the prison and its grounds, the Supreme Court, and the police-station in order.

The rations supplied by contractors were good, and there have been no complaints. By direction from the Justice Department, Wellington, in November, the dietary scale was varied, roast meat being substituted in lieu of boiled on three days a week.

Five officers were transferred to and 2 were received from other prisons; 1 warder was appointed from probation, and 1 probationer and 1 temporary warder were taken on during the year. There were no reports against officers.

Services were held every Sunday by the agent of the Prisoners' Aid Society and the clergymen of various denominations. Members of Church choirs have attended to supply music and singing. This is greatly appreciated, and I wish to record my thanks for their services. Mr. F. G. Cumming, Secretary, Prisoners' Aid Society, visits regularly and procures clothing, &c., and situations for many prisoners on their discharge. The society is well organized, and many benefits have resulted from the assistance given to deserving cases.

FIRST OFFENDERS' PROBATION ACT.

There were 3 males on probation at commencement of the year. Twelve males were placed on probation by Supreme Court, and 2 males by Magistrate's Court; 2 were received on transfer from other districts. Three males were discharged, having completed their term. One male having failed to comply with the terms of his probation was charged at the Supreme Court and sentenced to two years' hard labour. Twelve males were transferred to other districts. At end of the year 4 males remained on probation. One male who was discharged from New Plymouth Prison on probation, in accordance with the terms of the Habitual Criminals Act, 1908, reports regularly.

I have, &c.,

J. C. SCANLON,

The Under-Secretary for Justice, Wellington.

Gaoler and Probation Officer.

HANMER SPRINGS PRISON.

SIR,—

H.M. Prison, Hanmer, 6th January, 1911.

I have the honour to report on the workings of this prison for the year ended 31st December, 1910.

There were 24 prisoners in custody on the 1st January. Twenty-one males were received and 23 discharged during the year, the average number in custody being 19.92.

Six prisoners were returned to Lyttelton during the year, 4 having being reported for minor prison offences and being generally unsuitable for this place, and 2 for medical treatment.

The general health of the prisoners has been very good. There was practically no sickness during the year.

With the few exceptions mentioned above, the conduct of prisoners has been very good, and the work done on the average compares favourably with previous years.

The prisoners carried out the following work during the year—viz.: Planted 366,120 trees; pits dug, 180,530; cleared 80 acres of scrub and broom; formed roads and culverts; cleared around young trees; and cleared fence-lines.

Nine new huts, and a common room 41 ft. by 27 ft. have been built by prison labour during the year. This accounts for the decrease in work done for the Forestry Department. The new common room is heated by means of a Daisy boiler and hot-water pipes, and will no doubt be of great comfort, and should be much appreciated by the prisoners during the winter months.

The officers have carried out their duties well.

I have, &c.,

W. AYLING,

The Under-Secretary for Justice, Wellington.

Acting-Gaoler.