

continuing their studies by the help of the usual text-books, while several have with your permission become pupils of the International Correspondence Schools. School is held on three evenings per week for two hours; 5.30 p.m. to 7.30 p.m. being devoted to lessons, while from 7.30 to 8 p.m. is employed at physical drill. The ordinary school routine is followed, including the usual home lessons. As a proof of success I might state that quite a number of the older prisoners have asked to be allowed to attend school. On the other hand, quite a number of the younger prisoners are decidedly averse to attending, and those most in need of tuition are usually amongst the number who have to be given to understand that attendance is compulsory. In all cases where a youth is sent to Invercargill a full report accompanies him, in which his deficiencies and the best means of remedying them are set out. I am therefore at once placed in a position which materially assists me in obtaining the best results. This work can be extended and carried out under much better conditions when the new schoolroom now nearing completion is occupied.

Divine service has been held regularly every Sunday. The ministers of the various denominations, assisted by Mr. McLean, City Missionary, attend in turn. Mr. James Crawford visits and converses with the prisoners every Sunday afternoon. A class for religious instruction of Roman Catholic youths is conducted by the Rev. Dean Burke assisted by the Rev. Father Cavanagh, and is held weekly. The City Missionary, Mr. McLean, is doing a really good work. Every prisoner is visited by him before discharge, and if he requires assistance it is forthcoming, and work is found for all who require it, and if living at a distance they are put on board the train and seen off by him.

FIRST OFFENDERS' PROBATION ACT.

During the year 3 males were placed on probation; 1 failed to fulfil the conditions of release and was rearrested and committed to prison; 1 was transferred to another district; the other is still on probation and is giving every satisfaction. I have once again to acknowledge the valuable assistance received from Inspector Mitchell in assisting me in obtaining information on which to base my reports, and in enabling me to keep in touch with probationers in outlying districts.

I have, &c.,

M. HAWKINS,

The Under-Secretary for Justice, Wellington.

Gaoler and Probation Officer.

LYTTTELTON PRISON.

SIR,—

H.M. Prison, Lyttelton, 12th January, 1911.

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

At the beginning of the year there were 113 males and 4 females in custody; 531 males and 95 females were received, 4 being declared habitual criminals. This is an increase of 9 males and 20 females on the last year. The number of individual prisoners received was 472 males and 76 females; 59 males and 19 females having been admitted more than once.

During the year 519 males were discharged (including 8 habitual criminals who had finished their sentences and were transferred to New Plymouth) and 79 females, leaving 125 males and 20 females in custody. Eleven of the males remaining in custody were habitual criminals.

Crime cannot be said to be on the increase in this district, as the number of males received is exactly the same as last year. It is also gratifying to find that no crimes of a very serious nature have been committed. The number of prisoners serving sentences of twelve months and upwards having decreased by 9 at the end of the year supports this statement.

The health of the prisoners has been good, no sickness of a serious nature having occurred. Several prisoners on admission were suffering from incurable diseases, and were exempted from work after examination by the surgeon. These are not included amongst those who fell sick in prison. Two prisoners undergoing sentences (one of them for life) had to be transferred to the Mental Hospital at Sunnyside, where they still remain. A prisoner awaiting sentence at the Supreme Court on a charge of forgery committed suicide by strangling himself in his cell. He had been served with his dinner, which he ate, and an hour later, when the warder opened his cell to have the dinner-utensils removed, he was found dead. An inquest was held, and a verdict returned by the Coroner that the deceased committed suicide by strangling himself.

The food-supply has been of excellent quality, and recently an alteration was made allowing prisoners roast meat three times a week. This they greatly appreciate, and I would gladly welcome any other change that would tend to vary the monotony of the diet.

The conduct of the prisoners on the whole has been good, and punishments were few. The prisoners have been made to understand that no concessions will be granted unless earned by good conduct and industry. The majority of them fully recognize this, and conduct themselves accordingly. In some cases special remission has been given to prisoners who have done their best to earn it, and this has acted as an incentive to others, who are now also trying to merit some reduction in their sentences. I consider this plan of putting them on their good behaviour with the hope of some reward an excellent one.

There have been no escapes or attempted escapes from the prison during the year. One of two prisoners, while being escorted by a warder from the Supreme Court, Timaru, in June last, jumped from the train while in motion. He was recaptured a week later near Dunedin, and received an additional sentence of six months. Two others, who were sent from here to the Supreme Court, Greymouth, for trial, escaped from the lock-up there after being sentenced, but they were recaptured five days later under the Greymouth Wharf, and were committed to the Supreme Court, Christchurch, for sentence.