

during which time the work of construction had to be suspended. Wet and windy weather also caused considerable delay, as did also the difficulty of procuring a suitable plant. These difficulties having been successfully overcome, no further trouble need be anticipated. The work is of considerable magnitude, and involves the use of a large amount of labour and machinery. At the present time the plant consists of two locomotives, fifty wagons, one Priestman dredge and pontoons, one steam-crane, one steam pile-driver, one motor-launch, and several barges. About three miles of railway-track is being used, including loop lines and sidings. During the year 8,000 tons of rubble has been deposited along the line of embankment, about one mile of which has been formed, leaving a little over half a mile to be still built. Rubble and bags of clay (twenty thousand of the latter have been used during the year), together with sand, piles, and fascines, are the materials principally used. The daily average of sand and clay moved amounts to about 400 tons. Now that the new wing has been completed and additional labour become available the work should progress rapidly towards completion. The bridge giving access to the prison farm-area now being reclaimed has been completed, and a tramway-line laid thereon. When this area, amounting to 650 acres, becomes available, it should prove a very valuable asset to the Prisons Department, besides providing useful and profitable employment for a large number of prisoners.

The system of transferring youthful first offenders to this Prison still continues. A large proportion of the prisoners confined in this Prison are first offenders, and with few exceptions are under twenty-five years of age. Many of them require both a mental and physical training. This is being attended to. A schoolroom capable of seating over seventy pupils has been built, school being held on three evenings during the week, from 6.10 p.m. to 8 p.m. The average attendance numbers forty. The usual standards are observed, and every prisoner under the age of twenty-five is obliged to attend until he can pass the Fifth Standard. After this his attendance becomes optional; but in the majority of cases such youths continue to attend, and some of them are now going up for the Sixth Standard certificate. There cannot be any doubt regarding the value of the work being done, and the results fully justify your action in appointing a properly qualified public-school teacher to give the necessary tuition. In this connection I would suggest that arrangements be made for holding an examination yearly, and that an Education Board Inspector be examiner. In the event of a prisoner passing the usual certificate could be issued. The results, besides being of use to the Prisons Board, should remove any doubt as to the value of the work being done. The system of allowing prisoners showing special ability an opportunity of continuing their studies through the medium of the International Correspondence School still continues, and is being attended with markedly good results.

During the year 8 prisoners were discharged on probation on the recommendation of the Prisons Board. In this respect there is need for more efficient control after release on probation. During the first few months after release, kindly supervision is necessary; this should be provided by the State, and should prevent many again lapsing into crime.

Great difficulty is still being experienced in obtaining a suitable class of officers. It is pleasing to note that a considerable increase in the rate of pay has been made. Employment outside, however, is still plentiful and wages high, and the life of a prison officer is not sufficiently attractive to induce men with the necessary qualifications to apply. In this connection I would suggest that an effort should be made towards securing the services of a number of competent tradesmen to act as instructing warders. It is very important that this should be done. The services of such men should prove of great benefit to the Department, and materially assist in the carrying-out of many works which it is now impossible to undertake with any prospect of success.

Divine service continues to be held every Sunday. The ministers of the various denominations, assisted by the City Missionary and Mr. James Crawford, attend in rotation. The Roman Catholic prisoners have services once a month. The Rev. Dean Burke also holds classes for Roman Catholic youths. The Salvation Army officers also attend monthly.

FIRST OFFENDERS' PROBATION ACT.

At the beginning of the year there were 6 males on the Probation Register of this district. During the year 5 males were placed on probation and 1 received on transfer from another district, making a total of 12 males dealt with. During the year 3 completed their terms satisfactorily, and 3 were apprehended and each sentenced to a term of hard labour for having failed to comply with the conditions of probation.

I have, &c.,

M. HAWKINS,

The Under-Secretary for Justice, Wellington.

Gaoler and Probation Officer.

LYTTELTON PRISON.

SIR,—

H.M. Prison, Lyttelton, 28th January, 1913.

I have the honour to submit to you the following report upon this institution for the past year, ended on the 31st December, 1912, and also to forward the usual returns—statistics, expenditure, &c.—for the same period.

I was appointed Gaoler of this Prison in June last, and entered upon my duties in that capacity on the 17th of the same month.