

Napier.—The departmental recommendation regarding this building not having been carried out, steps should be taken to place the female wing in proper repair. The question of rebuilding or transferring to another site should receive early consideration.

Wellington.—The condition of the older part of this building has been referred to in previous reports, and the general position fully set out. Steps have been taken to provide adequate accommodation for the single officers, the quarters previously set apart for their use having been cramped and inconvenient.

Lyttelton.—If a new site has been found for a prison at a reasonable distance from Christchurch this building will eventually be abandoned, and beyond the small expenditure involved in fitting up the old female wing for the reception of reformatory, unconvicted, and trial prisoners, and debtors, the cost of maintaining the Lyttelton Prison buildings has been kept as low as possible.

Dunedin.—Since the last annual report was written this prison has been reduced in size by the closing of one of the wings and the utilization of the greater part of the old female wing for male prisoners. The alterations involved have been carried out by the Public Works Department.

Invercargill.—Considerable progress has been made with the erection of a further extension to the Invercargill Prison buildings.

Gisborne.—Steps are being taken to commence the erection of a high enclosing fence or wall round the gaol property, as recommended last year. Hollow concrete blocks of prison manufacture will probably be the material used.

Palmerston North.—As it has been decided to close this police gaol, the contemplated improvements will not be carried out.

Greymouth.—The gaol buildings at Greymouth are in good repair, and have required no expenditure during the year.

PROGRESS DURING THE YEAR.

The reports of the Gaolers indicate that fair progress has been made in the various works being carried out by prison labour, particularly at Invercargill, Waikeria, and Auckland.

Waikeria.—The work of preparing a site for the central wing of the new Waikeria Prison, which involved some very extensive excavations, has now been completed, the foundations of the building have been laid, and it is anticipated that the first wing will be ready for occupation in March next.

Auckland.—The progress made in regard to buildings and other works at this prison is fully set out in the Gaoler's report.

Addington.—A vegetable-garden has been established at the Addington female prison, with satisfactory results, a surplus being available for Lyttelton. The yards and grounds have now been cleared of old buildings and other debris, and the high fence has been extended to the Poulsen Street frontage, to enclose the whole of the property. The whole place is now in excellent order, and when the small administrative block, for which plans are being drawn, is provided, the institution will be complete in every respect.

Rotoaira Prison Camp.—In accordance with directions received from the Minister of Justice, preparations are now in progress for the establishment of a camp on the Waimarino Plains, about four miles from the Waimarino Railway-station, with the object of forming a new road from Waimarino to Tokaanu. As it will be necessary to remove the camp from time to time as the work proceeds, the proclaimed prison area has been given the same name as the road that is being constructed—viz., "Rotoaira."

Regulations.—The regulations required under the Crimes Amendment Act, 1910, were gazetted on the 1st August last. They apply particularly to prisoners who have been declared habitual criminals or offenders, or who have been sentenced to terms of reformatory detention. The chief feature of the regulations in so far as the last-named prisoners are concerned is the provision of a small weekly wage for those whose work warrants it. Up to the present time the system has worked well, and has proved a useful incentive to the prisoners, both in regard to the quantity and quality of their work and to their general conduct. If the same satisfactory position continues, an extension of the scheme might be undertaken, and its application to hard-labour prisoners considered. Only a very limited number of the men employed under these regulations availed themselves of the right to send their earnings to their wives or families.

Probation Officers.—The appointment of gentlemen outside the Prison and Police services to act as Probation Officers under the Crimes Amendment Act has worked satisfactorily, and it will probably be necessary before long to make similar appointments in some of the country districts if suitable men can be found for the purpose.

Physical Drill.—The extension of instruction in physical drill to the Auckland Prison during the year has proved an undoubted success. The prisoners selected for the squads evince a considerable interest in the work, and their condition and general demeanour are much improved by the various exercises, which are carried out both singly and collectively in a very creditable manner. The work carried on at Invercargill in this direction is also very well done, and the warders in each place who act as instructors are worthy of commendation.

Education.—The evening schools at Auckland and Invercargill are being well and efficiently carried on. The Auckland school was started in November last, and the experiment is proving satisfactory, all the prisoners selected for school-work appearing to be much interested in their lessons, and none of them having given the slightest trouble during school hours. As the work of instruction became too onerous for one prison officer, an experienced schoolmaster has recently been engaged to carry on the classes, with a prison officer as his assistant.