

it will easy access to the Tongariro Park and the Taupo Lake district, and if it is, as it should be, carried on round the lake to Taupo will provide a good connection with the Rotorua district and eventually become part of a main trunk road through this part of the Dominion to Auckland and the Bay of Plenty district. In this light it may be regarded as a national work. Owing to the nature of the country through which the road passes it is not likely to be made for very many years, unless carried out in the manner now proposed. In spite of the drawbacks due to the weather very good progress has been made, and now that most of the preliminary work inseparable from the formation of a prison camp, which is greater than many people suppose, has been completed the work of road-construction should proceed quite satisfactorily.

The arrangements made with your sanction for providing for the housing of prisoners at Mount Cook in order to do away with the necessity for marching them through the streets have been completed, and this practice has now ceased, with great advantage to the discipline and administration of the prison and the prisoners. The clay will be worked out at Mount Cook in a comparatively short time, when the making of bricks will have to cease. It is proposed to carry out a system of improvement to the reserve before it is handed over for whatever purposes it may be decided to put it to in the future.

The decision to erect a small permanent prison at Point Halswell has been acted upon, and the work of preparing the site is now in hand, and excellent progress is being made. When this prison is completed both Mount Cook and the Terrace Prisons can be closed, and the sites handed over for other purposes. The planting of the hills at Point Halswell is being carried on, and a further area will be planted this year.

It will be seen that a very considerable amount of work has been undertaken during the year, and that the Department has been endeavouring to carry out as rapidly as possible—and I venture to think with considerable success—the policy that you have laid down. The appointment of Mr. Hawkins as Works Supervisor has materially contributed. Until the works in hand have been further advanced no comprehensive scheme of classification or reform can be carried out, but wherever possible improvements are being made.

The question of extending the system of probation to cases of prisoners sentenced to hard labour, referred to by the Inspector, had already been considered by you and certain proposals in this direction decided upon. The question of legislation in regard to the employment of persons imprisoned in default of maintenance has also received consideration.

On the resignation of Dr. Hay Mr. C. E. Matthews, who had been acting as Deputy Inspector, was appointed Inspector of Prisons, and he has devoted himself closely to the work of inspection. During the year he paid a visit to the Australian prisons to gain an insight into the methods of prison-management adopted there, and has obtained a great deal of useful information.

The staff generally has worked excellently, and has shown a keen desire to assist in the successful carrying-on of the various works. A special need of commendation is due to the officers of the camps, who have to carry on their duties in isolated places and are in a large measure debarred from the ordinary enjoyments of life.

C. B. JORDAN.

REPORT OF THE INSPECTOR OF PRISONS.

SIR,—

Office of the Inspector of Prisons, Wellington, 28th June, 1915.

I have the honour to submit my annual report on the prisons of the Dominion.

The past year has been one of the busiest that the Department has known, but the great European War that has been in progress during nearly the whole period since the last report was written has so overshadowed all local questions that there is little room in the public mind for the consideration of matters affecting the interests of any particular department of the State, or of any special section of the community. The present report will therefore consist mainly of a summary of the activities of the prisons during the year, with brief reference to matters that concern the administration and the management and control of the inmates.

In compliance with your direction, last year I visited the Australian States for the purpose of investigating the prison systems of New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, and South Australia. Between the months of May and July I inspected all the more important prisons and some of the inebriates' institutions in the four States named. I made myself as familiar as was possible in the time at my disposal with their different systems, and the details of their management, the industries in operation, and the arrangement and construction of the various prison buildings. I was treated with the utmost courtesy and consideration by the Ministerial and Permanent Heads of the Prisons Department in each State, and by the Governors and other officers in charge of the various institutions; while every facility was given to me to obtain all the information I required. My tour was interesting and instructive, and gave me a wider range of knowledge regarding the matters with which the Department is called upon to deal.

Since I resumed my duties in August last I have made frequent visits to all the New Zealand prisons, and all the more important police-gaols. From time to time I have had occasion to suggest alterations and improvements in existing methods that have appeared necessary, and I think I am justified in saying that the changes made in accordance therewith have increased the general efficiency of the service.

I am pleased to be able to report that discipline among the officers and the prisoners is well maintained; that the buildings are as well kept as the age and unsuitability of many of them will permit; and that the general management is now on a satisfactory footing,