

1916.
NEW ZEALAND.

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, PRISONS BRANCH

(REPORT ON), FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st DECEMBER, 1915;

ALSO

OPERATION OF THE FIRST OFFENDERS' PROBATION ACT, 1908

(REPORT ON), FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st DECEMBER, 1915.

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

The UNDER-SECRETARY, Department of Justice, to the HON. MINISTER OF JUSTICE.

Department of Justice, Wellington, 10th May, 1916.

I HAVE the honour to present the report of the Inspector of Prisons for the year ended 31st December last, together with extracts from the Gaolers' reports and the annual prison statistics.

C. B. JORDAN.

REPORT OF THE INSPECTOR OF PRISONS.

SIR,—

Office of the Inspector of Prisons, Wellington, 1st May, 1916.

The thirty-fifth annual report on the prisons of the Dominion is submitted during the second year of the Great War, and, like its predecessor, will consist mainly of a brief review of the past year's work and the presentation of the statistics relating to crime and criminals.

The whole of the prisons have been frequently and carefully inspected during the year, and the discipline of officers and prisoners has been kept up to the requisite standard.

The order and cleanliness of all the prison buildings has been well maintained, and the manner in which this branch of the work has been attended to reflects the greatest credit on the Gaolers and officers concerned.

STATISTICS.

The statistics in regard to the prison population and the number of offenders under the different heads exhibit the usual fluctuations. From June of 1915 until the present date there has been a gradual decrease in the number of committals, but from January to May, 1915, the number was considerably higher than for the corresponding period of 1914, consequently the daily average for 1915 shows an increase of 28·31 over the figures for 1914. Up to the time of writing it cannot be said that there has been the marked decline in the number of criminals in New Zealand that appears to have occurred in Great Britain as a result of the war, although it is known that quite a percentage of men who have undergone imprisonment have enlisted with the Expeditionary Forces. From the beginning of the war it has been apparent that a strong feeling of patriotism has existed among those who have had to be segregated in the interest of the State, and there has been evidence that this feeling has continued after release.

In last year's report it was remarked that the large increase then noted on the figures for 1913 was confined entirely to male prisoners. In 1915, however, the position was altered, there being a substantial increase in the number of female prisoners compared with previous years. This is probably due to more drastic police action having been taken during the past year in regard to a certain class of offenders.