

GENERAL.

Health of Prisoners.—The figures regarding the health of prisoners are given in Table A. The daily average on the sick-list is shown to have been considerably lower than for the previous year or for several years past. This is entirely satisfactory, but as the sick-returns in prisons are more largely affected by the state of health of offenders on admission than by illnesses having their origin within the prison, the annual statistical returns cannot be regarded as a reliable index of the general health of the inmates in any particular year.

Deaths.—Eleven persons, including one suicide, died in prison during the year, compared with thirteen in 1914 and ten in 1913.

FIRST OFFENDERS' PROBATION ACT.

The proposed change referred to in last year's report in regard to the appointment of gentlemen not connected officially with the Penal Departments as Probation Officers under the First Offenders' Probation Act has now been given effect to in the four chief centres. It is hoped that this alteration will satisfactorily meet the objection that has been raised from time to time to the necessity that previously existed for this class of probationers to report to the Gaolers at the prisons.

From the returns received from Probation Officers it appears that ninety-three persons were placed on probation in 1915, compared with eighty-seven in 1914. Of these, twelve have now completed their terms without relapse, two have been rearrested and committed to prison, two absconded, and seventy-seven still remain under supervision.

The total sum ordered to be paid by the Courts towards the cost of prosecutions amounted to £369 2s. 6d., of which £80 was due from one probationer, who absconded. The amount collected was £200 14s. 6d.

C. E. MATTHEWS,
Inspector of Prisons.

EXTRACTS FROM GAOLERS' REPORTS FOR 1915.

ADDINGTON PRISON.

During the year two prisoners died, one suddenly, and one after eleven days' illness. Inquests were held and verdicts in accordance with the medical evidence were returned.

The women were employed in the vegetable and flower gardens, laundry, sewing-rooms, and in general cooking and cleaning.

Grey drill dresses, with white facings for the first offenders, have been provided in place of the general prison dress.

The room which was used for Divine service has been suitably furnished as a chapel.

Apart from the ordinary prison sewing, the women have taken a great interest in the Red Cross work, &c., having made, since October, 46 dozen handkerchiefs for Red Cross and Lady Liverpool Fund, 30 garments for Red Cross, and 161 articles for District Hospital, besides several bundles of mending for same.

With one or two exceptions the conduct of the prisoners has been very good.

AUCKLAND PRISON.

During the year 1,296 males and 166 females were received, being a decrease of 242 males and an increase of 7 females on the previous year. One male prisoner received the death sentence, which was afterwards commuted to imprisonment for life. Four of the females received were sentenced to reformatory treatment.

Five deaths took place during the year, and 1 prisoner committed suicide.

The health of the prisoners has been good, the daily average on the sick-list being only 4.68 males and 0.18 females, chiefly due to the number of admissions to the District Hospital—viz., 17 males and 1 female—some of whom were detained there for months. Cases treated in the Prison were of a minor nature.

The conduct of the prisoners has, on the whole, been excellent.

Physical drill and evening school for prisoners still continues to work well, the results being very satisfactory.

The stonework of south-wing extension of the Prison has been completed, and a start made with roofing by putting the principals in position.

As usual, most of the prisoners have been employed at quarry-work, dressing stone for the building, &c. A stone wall has also been built enclosing the Prison reserve on the Clifton Road boundary. Stone-crushing, from which a good revenue is derived, did not come up to expectations this year. Owing to the war local bodies have been curtailing expenditure, and fewer orders were received.