

1917.
NEW ZEALAND.

PRISONS

(REPORT ON), FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st DECEMBER, 1916;

ALSO

OPERATIONS OF THE FIRST OFFENDERS' PROBATION ACT, 1908

(REPORT ON), FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st DECEMBER, 1916.

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

The Hon. the MINISTER IN CHARGE OF THE PRISONS DEPARTMENT to His Excellency the GOVERNOR-GENERAL.

MY LORD,—

Wellington, 15th July, 1917.

I have the honour to submit to Your Excellency the report of the Prisons Department for the year 1916.

I have, &c.,

J. A. HANAN,

Minister in Charge of Prisons Department.

The INSPECTOR OF PRISONS to the Hon. the MINISTER IN CHARGE OF THE PRISONS DEPARTMENT.

SIR,—

Prisons Department, Wellington, 30th June, 1917.

I have the honour to submit the thirty-sixth annual report on the prisons of the Dominion, together with the prison statistics and extracts from the reports of the Gaolers and of the First Offenders' Probation Officers. The statistics and Gaolers' reports are for the calendar year ended 31st December last, while the reports of the five Probation Officers cover the period from the dates of their respective appointments to the 31st March, 1917.

Although, as indicated by the statistics, there has been a slight decrease in the prison population compared with the daily average for the previous twelve months, the year has been a very busy one both for the headquarters staff and for the Gaolers and other officers of prisons. The stress of the work has naturally been very much accentuated owing to the depletion of staffs consequent upon war conditions. Unlike other Departments, the Prisons Department is unable to employ female labour, neither can it utilize the services of youths below military age. As you have already been advised, the position has now become so acute that no further eligible men can be spared from our ranks if the efficiency of our control and management is to be maintained.

AMENDED PRISON REGULATIONS.

In compliance with your instructions, regulations have been drafted providing for an improved classification; for the removal of anomalies in connection with the treatment of remand and trial prisoners, debtors, first-class misdemeanants, and prisoners sentenced to imprisonment without hard labour; for a differentiation between the treatment of first offenders and those who have served previous sentences; and for the management and government of a Borstal institution.

Pending the gazetting of the new regulations a "general order" is being issued bringing into force immediately the sections dealing with remand and trial prisoners, debtors, first-class misdemeanants, and prisoners sentenced to imprisonment without hard labour.

This will enable unsentenced prisoners and prisoners of the non-criminal class to be placed on a much more satisfactory footing than heretofore, and will assist the Department in carrying out the scheme you have laid down for the amelioration of the conditions under which such prisoners are confined, and for the making of a clear line of demarcation between the criminal and the non-criminal.

An improvement in the general conditions, tending to humanize some of the older prison methods, has already been made, as personally directed by you after your initial visit to the prisons of the Dominion.