

Suitable employment has been found for several of the prisoners on discharge.

It has been suggested to the various official and other visitors that they and the different bodies they represent should form a co-operative prison-gate mission, and that their help and supervision should be given to the prisoners on discharge. This would be more helpful and practical than the present method of prison-visiting; and, as it is the reform of the prisoners, and not the prison, that is required, this should appeal to those sincerely desirous of helping the prisoners in the best way.

AUCKLAND PRISON.

During the year 1,100 males and 110 females were received, being a decrease of 296 males and 56 females on the previous year's receipts. Of those received, 27 were habitual criminals, mostly from other prisons.

During the same period 1,118 males and 115 females were discharged or otherwise disposed of. There remained in custody at the end of the year 203 males and 17 females, 35 of the males being habitual criminals and 41 for reformatory treatment.

Two deaths took place in the District Hospital. One man was under sentence of three years, and had been in the hospital nearly six months suffering from tuberculosis; the other, a middle-aged man, was on remand for alcoholism.

The health of the prisoners on the whole has been good. There was a daily average of 3.73 males and 0.02 females on the sick-list. This is accounted for by the number of admissions into the District Hospital, some remaining there for a lengthy period. In this connection I may here remark that a number of derelicts, quite unfit for work and requiring medical attention, are frequently received into prison, thus helping to swell the sick-list. They are not criminals; still, prison seems to be the only place where they can be fed and sheltered. Some suffer from incurable diseases and are unfit subjects for either a home or prison; yet the prison is saddled with their maintenance. There exists an urgent need for another institution to which these unfortunates can be sent.

The conduct of the prisoners as a body has been good. There were 50 punishments against 37 individuals. Seeing the worst class of prisoners are confined here, punishments are not excessive.

There was one escape during the year, but the prisoner was recaptured the same night, and received a sentence of hard labour.

The principal work carried out has been the completion of the South Wing extension of the Prison, which is now being occupied by habitual criminals, most of whom were transferred here from New Plymouth. In addition to cell accommodation this wing contains officers' quarters, including kitchen and dining-room, reading-room, and billiard-room; schoolroom (now in use); infirmary, medical officer's room, and dispensary and stores, the fitting-up of which is all but finished, and will soon be ready for occupation. Some of the old wooden buildings can then be demolished, and more yard-space obtained. The subdivision of the exercise-yard is now being gone on with, but it will be some time before it is completed.

Nearly twelve months ago a start was made with the erection of a stone wall, 20 ft. high, to divide the Grammar School ground from that of the Prison, and afford space for five courts for the school. This work has progressed very satisfactorily; although solid rock had to be cut through in many places, over two-thirds of the work has been done.

The outer wall of the Prison has been carried across the road inside the railway-gates, thus giving more privacy from the public view. A large archway is left for vehicular traffic, and a smaller arch over each footpath. This gives the entrance to the Prison grounds a handsome appearance.

Quarry-work, as usual, has utilized the largest working-party, getting out stone for building purposes and for stone-crusher. Notwithstanding that local bodies had to curtail expenditure owing to the war, the cash received for road-metal was considerably in advance of that of last year.

Physical drill daily, and evening school for prisoners on three nights a week, under competent teachers, are still being carried on with satisfactory results.

The spiritual welfare of the prisoners is well cared for, visiting clergymen being regular in their attendance, seeing and conversing with prisoners. There are three religious services held each Sunday.

The conduct of the staff has been good. Five officers joined the Expeditionary Forces during the year, one of whom was returned from the training-camp as medically unfit, and has resumed his prison duties.

EXTRACT FROM SCHOOLMASTER'S REPORT.

In reply to a memorandum from the Inspector of Prisons regarding the work carried on in the Prison school, the schoolmaster at Auckland reports as follows:—

The work done in the various classes is what is done in primary schools in similar classes—reading and spelling from the books read in the various standards, writing and English graded in difficulty according to the standard of the pupil, and geography of the British Empire.

With regard to progress, diligent prisoners make far better progress than children do. One man, no longer a pupil, worked from Standard 2 to Standard 5 in arithmetic in one year—what an average child takes four years to do. Others, again, appear unable to retain what they quite understand at the time of explanation. Lack of self-control appears to explain this condition. As a rule the men who make best progress are not those with heavy sentences, for the latter brood over their troubles.