

With regard to the value of the work, this may be regarded from two standpoints—the actual amount of knowledge gained and the break made by the school in the daily routine. Maoris, as a rule, and men who know they will be free in a short time, work hard and make good progress, but the long-sentence men value school only inasmuch as it makes a break in the monotony of prison life.

GISBORNE PRISON.

There were in custody on the 1st January, 1916, 13 males and 1 female, total 14; and on the 31st December last 8 males, 2 females, total 10.

The health and conduct of the prisoners have been good. There was one escape during the year, but the escapee was soon recaptured. There were a few minor cases of sickness caused by the after-effects of alcoholism.

The prisoners were employed during the year at building a wall around the grounds, removing a sandhill at the back of the Prison, also attending to the garden and improving the grounds. The female prisoners have been constantly employed at keeping their quarters clean, washing and repairing prison blankets and clothing.

The conduct and attention to duty of the officers have been good.

GREYMOUTH PRISON.

There were in custody on the 1st January, 1916, 7 males and 2 females; expiration of sentence, 25 males and 2 females.

The general health of the prisoners has been very good, excepting three male prisoners received for medical treatment and suffering from effects of drink.

The prisoners were employed during the year keeping the Prison clean, and digging and cropping Prison garden. The garden is now well cropped with potatoes and vegetables, and it is hoped soon to be able to dispose of surplus vegetables and pay proceeds into Public Account.

INVERCARGILL PRISON.

At the beginning of the year there were 90 males and no females in custody; received during the year, 103 males and 5 females; discharged, 96 males and 4 females; leaving 97 males and 1 female in custody at the end of the year.

Generally speaking, the health of the prisoners has been good. One prisoner committed suicide in his cell. At the inquest a verdict was returned in accordance with the medical testimony that deceased died by self-induced asphyxia, being mentally deranged at the time.

Without exception, the conduct of the officers has been all that could be desired. As was to have been expected, there have been numerous changes owing to officers enlisting with the Expeditionary Forces.

The quality of the rations supplied has been excellent. As in the past, all vegetables required for the use of the institution are supplied daily from the Prison gardens as required.

The conduct of the prisoners has been satisfactory, but, as must be expected where a large number of young men are undergoing reformatory treatment, a certain amount of punishment has to be meted out to ensure proper control and discipline. There was one escape during the year, but the prisoner was recaptured by prison officers within thirty-six hours of the attempt. He was brought before the Supreme Court, and received an additional sentence.

The North Wing extension is rapidly nearing completion, and should be ready for occupation shortly. Included in this new building is a large hall (100 ft. by 35 ft.), which is to be used as a gymnasium and drill-hall. There is also a commodious Board-room, which has been suitably furnished; and attached are convenient rooms to serve as offices, ante-rooms, &c. A considerable portion of the outer wall of the Prison has been raised about 10 ft. The Prison lighter has been in constant commission during the year, conveying grit and shingle for block-making and concrete-work. The reclamation-work has been steadily pushed on, and about 50 chains of embankment completed, making a total now of 120 chains on the river-frontage; there still remains 45 chains (3 ft. in height) to be brought to completion. As the tidal waters have now been shut off over an area of 2,000-odd acres it has been found necessary to strengthen the embankment in places, which work is now being carried out. It is proposed to burn off about 500 acres of wiwi preparatory to sowing down in grass in the autumn.

The Prison school still continues with excellent results, instruction being given thrice weekly. We still have a number of men who are studying with the International Correspondence Schools, thus proving that they are anxious to improve their status in order to be better fitted to take their place in the world on release. As far as can be judged, of those committed to prison, about 60 per cent. are unable to meet the Fourth Standard requirements: these form the majority of the pupils for whose special benefit the school really exists.

As is the custom now, during the school vacation lectures are being given by prominent citizens on subjects that are not only entertaining but also instructive. I have again to express my thanks to Mr. A. McLean, agent of the Prisoners' Aid Society, for the invaluable assistance rendered at all times to the inmates of this institution.

The classes for physical instruction have been continued throughout the year with the best results. The officer who has charge of this branch of the work takes the keenest interest in his pupils.