

conditions, but owing to strong winds and no rain the crops were light. 423 half-bred ewes and 9 English Leicester rams were purchased, from which a return of 120 per cent. of lambs and 12 bales of wool was received. 32 chains of sheep-proof fencing have been erected, and shelter-belts to the extent of 104 chains have been planted with poplars, ponderosas, and macrocarpas.

Divine service was conducted towards the latter end of the year.

The Fields Supervisor, Mr. Macpherson, visits the Prison farm frequently, and gives valuable instruction.

ROTO AIRA ROAD PRISON.

There were 49 prisoners in custody at the beginning of the year; 43 prisoners have been received during the year; 14 hard-labour prisoners were discharged, and 22 habitual criminals and reformatory-detention prisoners were released by the Prisons Board.

There was one escape during the year. This prisoner was apprehended after two days' liberty, and sentenced to a further term of imprisonment.

The conduct of the prisoners has been fairly good.

The work of forming the Waimarino-Tokaanu Road still continues to progress favourably. The prisoners at Roto Aira No. 1 camp have been employed chiefly on metal-crushing and road-metalling work. A little over a mile of road has been metalled to a width of 16 ft. with an average depth of 6 in.: this gives a really fine road, and it promises to be one of the best country roads in the North Island.

The prisoners at Roto Aira No. 2 camp have done some very good work. The road is now formed to a point about six miles beyond the Whakapapanui Stream; in addition a number of permanent culverts have been placed in position. Three bridges have been completed, and a fourth is now in course of erection. All the timber required for bridges is now being squared by hand from the bush: this has been the means of a considerable saving of money, as well as getting a better class of timber than that supplied by the mills.

The conduct of the officers has been good.

Rations have been of good quality and regularly supplied.

Divine service has been held on several occasions.

WAIKERIA PRISON.

There were 54 male prisoners in custody at the beginning of the year, 31 of whom were detained for reformatory treatment, the remainder undergoing hard-labour sentences. There were 90 males in custody at the end of the year.

The conduct of the prisoners on the whole has been very satisfactory.

The health of the prisoners has been good. There was one admission to the Hamilton Hospital. Other cases of illness were of a mild nature, and were treated in the Prison by the medical officer.

The new cell-range and kitchen wing have been finished, and an auxiliary cell-house erected on the east side of the main wing. All the prisoners have been transferred from the old cell-houses and huts to the new Prison. Work on the administrative wing has been delayed on account of other necessary work, but the office portion is being proceeded with, and is almost complete. The electric bells have been installed in the cells of the new cell-range. The Chief and Principal Warders' cottages have been connected up to the gaol by telephone. A supply-tank for bathing has been fixed in the bathroom, and I am pleased to say that it is a great success, as it results in a saving of water, and the prisoners can be bathed in half the ordinary time. The most important feature is that they are all under the officer's supervision all the time they are bathing. A tell-tale clock has been installed in the cell-range and No. 1 cell-house, and is working satisfactorily.

The Chief Warder's cottage has been finished, and two warders' cottages have been built and the foundations of another started. All the cottages on the farm have the electric light installed.

Two gangs of prisoners have been continuously employed cutting the road through the Tokanui Mental Hospital ground. Their progress has been slow, as the cuttings have been heavy and the fillings deep. There have been a number of culverts laid. The Settlers' Road has also been kept in good repair.

On the farm 10 acres have been ploughed, fenced, and planted in potatoes on the south end of the estate. The crops are looking very healthy. Forty acres of oats have been sown, and they look very promising. A large quantity of clover hay has been cut and stacked. Forty acres of new ground on the north end of the farm have been cleared, ploughed, disked and harrowed, and turnips sown. The orchard this year is making good growth. All the trees were pruned and sprayed and the ground cultivated. Two acres of mangolds have been sown, also 1 acre of carrots. Sixty acres of old ground have been ploughed, disked and harrowed, and sown. Pigs were sold to the value of £166 7s. We have doubled our stock this year. Cattle sold realized £21. Vegetables sold for cash and supplied to other prisons realized £159 12s. 6d. This season we were much troubled with blight, which accounts for the reduction in the return as compared with last year. We have a large stock of vegetables in the garden that will be ready shortly. All the walnut-trees in stock have been planted on each side of the main drive.

Divine service was conducted for Protestants by Revs. Olphert and Shaw, and for Roman Catholics by Father Lynch.

Four officers resigned, one was granted leave to join the Expeditionary Force, and three were transferred to other prisons. The conduct of the officers has been good.