

WAIPA TREE-PLANTING PRISON.

This Prison was finally closed on the 21st December, 1916, owing to the area reserved for afforestation in the neighbourhood of the camp having been fully planted. The prisoners in custody at Waipa were transferred to Kaingaroa Prison.

The credit from the Forestry Department for the labour performed by the prisoners for the year is considerably less than last year's credit, which is chiefly due to the work being carried out at a long distance from the Prison and there being no credit given for the time taken up in marching to and from labour. During the months of September, October, and November a great portion of the time was lost through wet weather.

The conduct of the prisoners generally has been good, and a high standard of labour has been maintained throughout the year.

The rations supplied were of very good quality, and the quantity issued according to the ration scale proved entirely sufficient for the prisoners' requirements.

The conduct of the officers has been good, and their duties were carried out in a satisfactory manner.

At the close of the Prison one officer was transferred to Kaingaroa, and the other three officers, who have been granted leave of absence to enlist, will enter the military camp with the 25th Reinforcements on the 10th January, 1917.

WELLINGTON PRISONS.

At the commencement of the year there were in custody 187 males and 23 females; total, 210. In custody at the end of the year, 144 males and 22 females; total, 166. Nine male debtors were received; 6 males were released on the recommendation of the Prisons Board, and 3 males were transferred to a mental hospital; 7 males and 5 females were admitted to the District Hospital for treatment. The greatest number of cases of sickness at any one time was 6 males and 4 females. The daily average number in prison during the year was 169.39 males and 19.94 females; total, 189.33.

Two males died during the year, one whilst undergoing medical treatment for drunkenness.

There were 141 prisoners dealt with for breaches of the regulations, 54 of the number being placed in solitary confinement.

There was one escape and one attempted escape during the year. The escapee was captured on the 30th December after an absence of five months, and sentenced to a further two years' hard labour.

On the 19th December an outbreak of fire occurred in the tailors' workshop, damage being done to the extent of about £25.

I am pleased to record there were no offences committed by the officers during the year.

The sum of £407 13s. 9d. was paid into the Public Account during the financial year ending the 31st March, 1917.

The clergymen of the several denominations have held services on each Sunday in the year at the Terrace, Mount Cook, and Point Halswell.

The Official Visitors have made visits to the prisons at intervals and conversed with the prisoners.

At the present time great difficulty is being experienced in the matter of staff. A considerable number of officers, both married and single, having volunteered shortly after the beginning of the war, are now at the front. Every ballot still further reduces the number of experienced officers, and great difficulty is being experienced in the matter of finding suitable substitutes. As a result it frequently happens that quite inexperienced men have to be placed in positions calling for the exercise of the greatest vigilance and tact, and the results are not always satisfactory.

During the past year the inmates of the Wellington prisons have been employed as follows: At the Terrace a large central tailoring establishment has been organized and put in operation. Here the whole of the uniforms required for the various Prison officers throughout the Dominion are manufactured; also all prisoners' clothing, including underwear and socks, for all the prisons. The work is supervised by two tailor instructing warders, and many prisoners are thereby being instructed in a useful calling which should prove of great benefit to them on their release. The workshop is a large airy building, well lit and ventilated, and the prisoners employed therein are working under the best of conditions. A large central store has also been built underneath the workshop. Gardening has been carried on as usual, the whole of the supplies for the Terrace and Mount Cook Prisons being grown. During the year motor vehicles have been purchased, and the whole of the work in connection with the transfer of prisoners' stores and general cartage, &c., is now being carried out by the Department, resulting in added convenience besides being much more economical.

At Mount Cook Prison works bricks to the number of 801,000 were manufactured in a period of eight months during which brickmaking was being carried on. Of this number 607,296 were supplied to various Government Departments, the cash value being £1,358 3s. 11d., leaving a balance still to be disposed of. In addition to brickmaking, the workshops were kept fully employed. Two large road-rollers, of 4½ and 2½ tons respectively, were manufactured for Waikeria and Roto Aira roadworks; countershafting and gearing for pumping-plant for Point Halswell Prison; and repairs to trucks. A large quantity of tinware for use in the various prisons was also turned out, and in addition the whole of the engineering plant received a thorough overhaul.

At Point Halswell Prison a considerable amount of valuable work has been done. A six-roomed cottage in brick has been built for the officer in charge. The whole of the work, including manufacturing of the necessary bricks, has been carried out by prison labour under the direction of tradesmen officers. A line for the transmission of electric current has been laid from Miramar