

I wish to record my appreciation and thanks to the Railway Department, and also to the Police, for the valuable assistance rendered the Prison when called upon. There were many occasions during the past year when the courtesy and consideration extended by the Railway authorities enabled transfers and other contingent matters to be successfully dealt with.

NAPIER PRISON.

The general health of the prisoners has been satisfactory.

The conduct of prisoners during the year was good, there being only six minor prison offences against six prisoners.

The prisoners have been employed in the Borough Council quarry, Coote Road, a sum of £162 8s. 4d. having been credited to the revenue of the Department as a result of their labour.

I have to thank Mrs. E. Richmond, Official Visitor, for contributing a number of books for the Prison library. I have also to thank the clergymen of the various denominations for conducting religious services each Sunday, also the Visiting Justices for their prompt attendance when called upon, and the Police for their assistance regarding probationers.

NEW PLYMOUTH PRISON.

This Prison having been set apart for sexual perverts sentenced under sections 153 and 154 of the Crimes Act, 1908, the first draft of prisoners from Auckland arrived in February, 1917, and other drafts followed from other prisons. The prisoners are employed in the quarry and are strictly under observation, and in my opinion the quarry is the most suitable place both for safe custody and observational purposes.

I find this class of prisoners very mixed in temperament; some are of the vicious type, and others are weaklings, but the majority are nervous and excitable.

The work performed in the quarry by the prisoners is satisfactory, although we do not get full returns for work expended owing to the enormous quantity of stripping that has to be removed before we come to payable material.

Improvements have been made to the grounds at the back of the Prison. I commenced cultivating this section of the grounds, but owing to shortage of staff was unable to advance the work within the season. Judging, however, by the result of our first experiment, I feel that the back section of the grounds can be made to look as nice as the front, although it will take a considerable time before the work can be completed. If this work served no other useful purpose it would be justified on account of the opportunity it gives the management of separating prisoners who are better by themselves.

The conduct of the prisoners as a class has been good, and if it had not been for an agitating prisoner, who caused other prisoners to get restless, there would have been very little trouble.

The health of the prisoners has been exceptionally good, although a number had records of sickness in other prisons. We have a prisoner who arrived in New Plymouth a nervous wreck, subject to fits. I could not approach him, however gently, without his getting into a highly excitable condition. He was unfitted to do work of a ten-year-old child, but I am pleased to say that this man is now able to do a day's work and hold his head erect, and I believe he is overcoming his weakness. His fits are now of less frequent occurrence and are of a very mild nature.

The rations supplied have been of excellent quality. As we grow our own vegetables, the prisoners have variety and plenty.

We have had no escapes or attempted escapes during the year.

PAPARUA PRISON.

With the exception of an epidemic of dysentery, which affected the whole district, and of which one prisoner died in the Christchurch Hospital, the general health of the prisoners has been good.

The conduct of the prisoners on the whole has been very satisfactory, there being only one prisoner punished for an aggravated prison offence.

The conduct of the staff has been good.

The erection of the West Cell Range has steadily progressed, although a shortage of labour, both skilled and unskilled, has somewhat retarded progress. In addition to concrete and other work, some 30,000 blocks have been laid, bringing the erection of this building up to the level of flat concrete roofs.

Officers' cottages are being erected of concrete blocks, and one of these is now practically complete, another is well in hand, whilst a third has just been commenced.

A slaughterhouse has been erected and is now in use. A sheep-dip has also been constructed, and in the recent dipping proved very satisfactory.

A 4,000-gallon tank with iron angle and stand about 33 ft. in height, together with pumps, &c., was dismantled and transferred to this Prison from the Defence Reserve, Yaldhurst, to be used as a water-supply plant for the new prison.