

The rations supplied were of good quality, and no complaint was made as to the quantity or quality of the food issued according to the amended ration scale.

On the 18th August last the bootmakers' shop at this Prison was closed down, and the tradesmen and plant transferred to Paparua Prison. The dismantling of the unoccupied parts of the Prison has been proceeded with, and the material secured sent to Paparua and other prisons in the Dominion.

A party is still being provided for work at the Borough Council's quarry, and the balance of the prisoners are employed on work inside the Prison, chiefly cleaning and domestic.

As usual, Divine service has been conducted on Sundays in the Prison during the year.

NAPIER PRISON.

On the 1st January, 1918, there were in custody eleven males and two females, while during the year 134 males and seven females were received.

The greatest number of cases of sickness at any one time during the year was ten males: eight cases were sent to District Hospital. The majority of the cases of sickness occurred during the time of the influenza epidemic, five of the hospital cases were from this cause and two of the deaths. Rather a strenuous time was experienced during above period by both officers and prisoners.

There have been thirteen minor prison offences against eight prisoners.

The prisoners have been employed in the Borough Council's quarry, Coote Road, and in gardening, &c. The sum of £158 19s. 4d. has been placed to the credit of the Public Account for mortar, sand, stone, and other material from the quarry, maintenance for prisoners while under medical treatment, and other items.

The conduct of the officers, both permanent and temporary, I am pleased to state has been very satisfactory.

Mr. Holdsworth, Official Visitor, has visited the Prison once, and expressed himself as generally satisfied with the appearance of the Prison and the manner in which it was conducted. Mrs. Richmond, Official Visitor, has paid a number of visits to the Female Prison.

I have to thank the Prison Surgeon for his attention to prisoners during the trying time experienced when so many were sick with the epidemic of influenza.

Religious services have been held on every Sunday throughout the year.

NEW PLYMOUTH PRISON.

The prisoners have been employed mostly at quarry and gardening work, but with the class of prisoners we have it is difficult to carry on the work to advantage, as direct supervision is absolutely necessary. Considering, however, the obstacles we have to contend with I may state on the whole the prisoners employed in the quarry have worked satisfactorily. The prisoners employed in the garden are more trustworthy as far as safe custody is concerned. Better results would be obtained if we had more ground to cultivate, so as to relieve the quarry of some who are not altogether suitable for quarry-work. The men who are employed in the garden appear to take some interest in their work and give very little trouble.

We have commenced excavating a site for a piggery in a suitable position about 5 chains from any road or dwelling.

The cash received for metal and gravel amounts to £683 14s., and for the sale of vegetables £44 3s.

The conduct of the prisoners on the whole has been good, although we had twenty-four offences dealt with by the Visiting Justices against seven prisoners. By punishing these prisoners as they have been punished for their gaol "heroism" we have saved a number of good men from punishment who are desirous of doing their best for the Department and for themselves if protected by the officers against the agitators and would-be gaol "heroes," who are up against authority in their endeavours to get other prisoners to commit themselves against the regulations. My experience is that the majority of prisoners prefer discipline to slackness, as it gives them a chance to make good under the protection of the officers instead of being dominated by the gaol bully.

There was only one attempt to escape during the year, by a prisoner who made a bold dash for liberty. He was recaptured almost immediately. I feel well pleased with the combination of the officers on this occasion, as every one must have been at his post and acted promptly; also, one officer must have displayed great activity in outflanking or cutting the prisoner off so readily.

The health of the prisoners on the whole has been very good with the exception of the epidemic of influenza, which struck us very suddenly, but not severely. I am pleased to report that under the medical officer's direction the staff did all that was possible for the care of the prisoners, and the manner the prisoners accepted the discomfort of fumigations and other exacting precautionary measures was very gratifying to the staff.

Ministers of the various religious denominations under a set plan conducted services every Sunday, and I can safely say that all the ministers expressed themselves as well pleased with the respect and attention they have received from the prisoners. I have not received a report against any prisoner for misconduct at any of the services.

Mr. Bligh, of the White Cross League, of Sydney, lectured to the prisoners, also had a quiet talk to several of the prisoners separately.