

1919.
NEW ZEALAND.

PRISONS

(REPORT ON) FOR THE YEAR 1918-19.

ALSO

OPERATIONS OF THE FIRST OFFENDERS' PROBATION ACT, 1908

(REPORT ON), FOR THE YEAR 1918-19.

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

The Hon. the MINISTER IN CHARGE OF THE PRISONS DEPARTMENT to His Excellency the GOVERNOR-GENERAL.

MY LORD,—

Wellington, 15th August, 1919.

I have the honour to submit to Your Excellency the report of the Prisons Department for the year 1918.

I have, &c.,

THOMAS M. WILFORD,
Minister in Charge of Prisons Department.

The PERMANENT HEAD OF THE PRISONS DEPARTMENT to the MINISTER IN CHARGE OF THE DEPARTMENT.

SIR,—

Prisons Department, 1st August, 1919.

I have the honour to submit the thirty-eighth annual report on the prisons and prison institutions of the Dominion, together with the criminal statistics, the report of the Acting-Inspector of Prisons, and extracts from the reports of the Superintendents, Gaolers, and honorary Probation Officers. The statistics and Gaolers' reports are for the calendar year ended 31st December, 1918, while the Probation Officers' reports and the tables of expenditure and revenue cover the financial year terminating on the 31st March, 1919.

The Government Statistician's figures for 1918 show that the daily average number of prisoners in the whole of the prisons of the Dominion was 981·95, compared with 914·26 in 1917, an increase of 7·4 per cent. As pointed out elsewhere, however, the 1918 total included 222·928 military court-martialled prisoners, reducing the daily average of criminal prisoners to 759·022, against 860·149 prisoners of the same class in 1917. The past year is the first of the war years in which there has been any marked decrease in the number of persons sentenced to civil imprisonment in New Zealand. The diminution in our criminal population as a result of the war is still far less, proportionately, than has been the case in Great Britain, but it is satisfactory to note that our experience in this direction is at last approximating to that of the older countries.

PRISON POPULATION.

Comparative Figures.

The criminal statistics appearing as an appendix to this report show that the number of distinct persons received into the prisons and prison institutions of the Dominion during the year ended 31st December, 1918, was 3,150, compared with 4,112 in 1917 and 4,256 in 1916. It will thus be seen that there were 962 less persons sentenced to imprisonment in the past year than in 1917, and 1,106 less than in 1916. The daily average number of prisoners in 1918 was, however, 981·95, compared with 914·26 in 1917 and 942·77 in 1916. The increase in the daily average and the decrease in the receptions appears to be somewhat anomalous, but is probably accounted for by the fact that there was a considerable reduction in the number of short sentences imposed, while there was a substantial increase in the number of persons sentenced to twelve months and upwards. Offenders