

sentenced by military courts-martial to terms of hard labour exceeding twelve months no doubt provided the bulk of the longer sentences. Without this class of prisoner the daily average and reception figures would have more nearly approximated.

The table published under the heading "Prisoners sentenced by Military Courts-martial" shows that while the daily average of military prisoners was 222·928 in 1918, it was only 54·117 in 1917 and 3·017 in 1916. If these figures are deducted from the totals it will be seen that the daily average number of criminal prisoners was 939·753 in 1916, 860·149 in 1917, and only 759·022 in 1918.

From these figures it is satisfactory to note that the criminal population in our prisons during the year 1918 was less by 134·218 in the daily average than in 1913, the last statistical year before the commencement of the war. Recent returns indicate, however, that the current year is likely to end with a higher daily average of sentenced criminal prisoners than was the case in the year under review, the total daily average of all classes of prisoners for the year ended 31st March last being 1,003·43, as against 941·11 for the previous twelve months.

The fluctuations in the prison population from 1881 to 1918 inclusive are shown in the table below :—

Daily Average, 1881 to 1918.

Year.	Daily Average of Prisoners in Dominion Prisons.		
	Males.	Females.	Total.
1881	631·66	94·37	726·03
1891	459·22	58·39	517·61
1911	799·08	64·18	863·26
1912	855·28	64·07	919·35
1913	826·69	66·55	893·24
1914	916·09	63·72	979·81
1915	931·33	76·79	1,008·12
1916	895·99	82·78	942·77
1917	817·27	96·99	914·26
1918	896·98	84·97	981·95

Prisoners sentenced by Military Courts-martial.

During the past year the number of military offenders serving terms of imprisonment in the civil prisons reached the highest total recorded during the war period, there being 293 prisoners of this class in the different prisons of the Dominion in the month of March, 1918. The policy of separating this class of prisoner from the criminal class, and employing them on useful reproductive work, has been continued. The larger proportion of the military prisoners worked and conducted themselves satisfactorily while in confinement, but there were certain grave exceptions to this rule. As under conditions existing in the outside world, the presence of a few agitators in two of our institutions led on more than one occasion to a policy of passive resistance on the part of a section of the military offenders that caused our officers considerable trouble. Firmness in dealing with the ringleaders and the rank and file of those who rebelled against authority had, however, the usual effect, and for some time past there has been no recrudescence of the trouble. The period that has elapsed since the signing of the Armistice has naturally enough proved to be our time of greatest stress in controlling this class of prisoner. As pointed out in my last year's report, the Department was faced with an entirely new problem when it had to make provision for such a comparatively large influx of non-criminal prisoners. The position has been met as satisfactorily as possible, but the effect on the discipline and control of the general body of the prisoners has not been altogether satisfactory; and if it should unfortunately happen that a similar situation should again arise I sincerely trust that an endeavour will be made to confine military offenders in camps or other places entirely outside the jurisdiction of the Prisons Department.

The distribution of the military court-martialled prisoners confined in the prisons and prison institutions of the Dominion during the war period is clearly shown in the table given below :—

Military Court-martialled Prisoners in Civil Prisons.— Daily Average Number in Custody in the Principal Prisons of the Dominion during Four Years ended 31st December, 1918.

Prison.	1915.	1916.	1917.	1918.
Auckland	0·756	0·557	0·600	4·717
Invercargill .. .. .	..	..	3·500	39·030
Kaingaroa .. .. .	..	..	2·010	32·040
Lyttelton	0·016	0·016	0·032	0·065
Paparua .. .. .	..	1·980	2·229	44·256
Roto-aira	0·410	0·104	20·700	22·250
Waikeria .. .. .	..	..	10·400	58·300
Wellington	0·512	0·360	14·640	22·270
Totals	1·694	3·017	54·111	222·928