

REPORT OF THE SCHOOLMASTER AT AUCKLAND.

The roll number is twenty-seven. Two pupils are in Standard VI, five in Standard V, two in Standard IV, six in Standard III, five in Standard II, and seven in the primers.

The men in Standards V and VI can read with fluency and intelligence. Most of them are backward in English and composition, but show great eagerness to learn, and study these subjects in the evenings when no school is held. One, who could easily pass a Sixth Standard Proficiency Examination in arithmetic is taking algebra and shorthand. I can afford only one lesson per week in English to Standards III and IV, so that their progress in these subjects is necessarily slow, but the majority can read their particular class-book with ease, and their spelling and arithmetic are fairly good. In Standards V and VI the spelling and arithmetic are quite satisfactory. Standard II is, generally speaking, somewhat disappointing, especially in reading, but as the class is entirely composed of Maoris this is perhaps only to be expected.

The primers, for the most part, are men who have had no previous schooling, and they are greatly handicapped by the limited amount of time that I can give to them; but they show a surprising amount of patience, and do a good deal of work on "off nights," which I think indicates more clearly than anything else a praiseworthy desire for self-improvement.

The most difficult men to deal with are those who have had a little schooling. They are easily discouraged, and find such drudgery as learning tables, &c., particularly irksome.

I am ably assisted by the Prison staff, and the discipline of the class is good.

Despite the fact that the work of the year was considerably interrupted by the closing of the school during the influenza epidemic, satisfactory progress has been made, and most of the men in the standard classes will be ready for promotion within a month or so.

GISBORNE GAOL.

The health and conduct of the prisoners have been good. One prisoner was laid up for a few days with a septic arm. There were a few minor cases of sickness, of those suffering from the effects of alcoholism after being received. This district has just come through a severe epidemic of influenza. Fortunately none of the prisoners were affected with the disease.

The prisoners were employed during the year at keeping the prison clean, attending to the grounds, and building a concrete wall around the prison property, which is now complete except for the coping. The grounds at the back of the prison are now being levelled. The female prisoners were constantly employed at keeping their quarters clean and washing and repairing prisoners' clothes and blankets.

GREYMOUTH GAOL.

The general health of the prisoners has been very good, excepting one prisoner who had a mild form of influenza, and eight male prisoners received for medical treatment and suffering from the effects of drink.

The prisoners were employed during the year keeping the Prison clean, digging and cropping Prison garden, and washing and repairing clothing. The sum of £7 17s. 2d. was received for the sale of vegetables grown in the Prison garden. The garden is again planted with vegetables, and the prospects of a good crop are favourable.

INVERCARGILL BORSTAL INSTITUTION.

The health of the prisoners, other than the epidemic influenza sickness, has been good. Although there were twenty-one admissions to the District Hospital during the year, eleven of these were influenza cases with complications, two of whom died at that institution.

The conduct of the prisoners as a body has been satisfactory, there being fifty-four prisoners punished by the Visiting Magistrates, most of the offences being of a minor nature. There were no escapes or attempted escapes during the year. An initial classification of the inmates of the institution into seven classes was brought into operation early in the year, with an immediate beneficial effect.

Physical drill has been carried out in the gymnasium under the direction of a qualified instructor, with the result that there is a marked improvement in the physique and carriage of every youth within a few weeks after reception. The schoolmaster has conducted the educational classes most satisfactorily, but further educational facilities are required to obtain the best results. Quite a number of the brighter youths could, with opportunity given them, successfully go through the full primary-school course.

An entertainment committee comprising seven local gentlemen has been formed, and fortnightly concerts and lectures of an interesting and instructive nature are held. These are indeed appreciated, and will assist towards mental improvement.

Considerable progress has been made in respect to reclaiming an area to the south of the Otatara Embankment, to be used by the Defence Department as a rifle range. The embankment under construction has been carried out 33 chains.