

The entertainment committee provided the inmates with an entertainment or lecture at least once a month, and they have indeed been appreciated, and, being of an interesting and instructive nature, have helped towards mental improvement.

Demonstration classes in woodwork and bricklaying were undertaken during the year, and are proving very successful; and, although the inmates may not be made finished tradesmen, the foundation has been laid to cause the desire to complete on release the knowledge gained at the institution, and thereby have a means of earning an honest livelihood.

Progress during the year has been made with the new rifle-range reclamation embankment at Otatara.

The development of the Borstal Farm has made steady progress, and now the whole area is ring-fenced and subdivided into grazing-areas. There are now approximately 800 acres under grass, 40 acres in oat crops for chaff, and 40 acres in turnips for winter feed, and it is estimated to have a hay crop from 150 to 200 tons, and carrying 320 store stock and 92 milking-cows. An up-to-date piggery has been erected, allowing for the convenient handling of 90 pigs for fattening purposes.

A cell-house building to accommodate twenty-three inmates has been completed, and the domestic block, comprising bathroom, kitchen, stores, and officers' quarters, is on the verge of completion, likewise a residence for the estate-manager.

The following work has been carried out at the institution: Relaying the whole of the storm-water and sewerage systems; completion of three exercise-yards with exercise-rings and shelters; erection of first floor of new kitchen block, which is to include kitchen, bakehouse, storerooms, visiting-room, butcher's shop, coal-cellar, laundry, and drying-room and washhouse. Block-making and gardening have been carried on as usual, and the lighter has been fully employed conveying gravel for building purposes and roadmaking.

The conduct and efficiency of the staff has been fairly satisfactory, and in most instances keen interest is taken in maintaining a proper standard of discipline and in carrying out the various works.

JOINT REPORT OF SCHOOLMASTERS AT BORSTAL INSTITUTION.

The scheme of work embraces reading, writing, arithmetic; history on broad lines; geography as suggested by the reading lessons; literature, its appreciation and desirability; and general knowledge from the understanding of the language and import of readings from various authors, as well as from short addresses on suitable subjects, such as races, colonization, elementary astronomy, and zoology.

We wish to stress particularly our endeavour to show the students the treasures that lie ready to every one in our great English literature, and we hope later to have them read from standard authors of prose, poetry, and even drama. We are encouraged to this by the interest developed, and up to this sustained, of these hungry young minds for information and for the means of acquiring that information.

The mental processes of these young men, living as they do in community and therefore circumscribed and prejudiced, remind us of the workings of children's minds in their lack of method in approaching new subjects. They (the inmates) are in many ways big children.

We are pleased to report that the happiest relations exist between teachers and taught; that discipline is easy; that enthusiasm even is evinced. The officials have been of the greatest help in preventing waste of time when new pupils enter, and we wish to record our appreciation of their efforts in supervising classes when a teacher is engaged with other standards. From these points we think the Borstal Institution justifies its existence—the change in the point of view of many young men, as evidenced from the change of tone in answers, and their altering view of the problems of life, leading us to that conclusion.

The general note we beg to strike, then, is one of hopefulness that the attitude towards life of many of these young men will be changed—changed for the better.

It was with something of a shock that we found that a full half-dozen of these lusty young men could not read, could not write, and therefore were thrown necessarily into the thought-world of those whose limits of knowledge are the hearsays of the illiterate: for shame of illiteracy is a force quite sufficient to drive a young man into even lower company than his own.

KAINGAROA AFFORESTATION CAMP.

The Prisons Board held two meetings here during the year, examined and interviewed all prisoners sentenced to reformatory detention, and all hard-labour prisoners who had completed half their maximum sentence in terms of section 14 of the Statute Law Amendment Act, 1917, and subsequently recommended the release (on probationary license) of five prisoners—viz., one under the Reformatory Detention Act, 1910, and four under the Statute Law Amendment Act, 1917.

Three prisoners were brought before the Visiting Justice and dealt with for misconduct.

The general conduct of the prisoners has been exemplary, and the work carried out on the plantation has been entirely satisfactory. The following is a summary of the work done by prisoners for the Forestry Department during the year: Pits dug, 1,528,350; trees planted, 317,335; lining-out, weeding, ploughing, fire-breaks, roadmaking, fencing, stable-work, clearing for tree-planting, and general upkeep. The amount earned by the prisoners employed by the Forestry Department represents the sum of £2,669 11s. 2d.

The general health of the prisoners has been good; there were no cases of sickness during the year.