

PAPARUA PRISON.

The health of the prisoners has been good; very few cases of sickness having occurred, the open-air surroundings of the Prison being conducive to health.

There was one escape during the year, the prisoner being recaptured three days later on the plains, and sentenced to a further term of imprisonment. The conduct of the prisoners has been very good, the number of punishments found necessary being caused by twenty-two military objectors refusing to work on one occasion on account of one of their number being locked up for refusing to attend fire drill in the interest of their own safety.

Large numbers of boots and slippers have been manufactured in the bootmaker's shop for the Prisons and Mental Hospitals Departments.

The spiritual welfare of the prisoners has been well attended to by Staff Captain Barnes (Salvation Army), members of the Brethren faith, the Revs. Revell and Fox, and the Rev. Father Leen. Services have been held on Sundays throughout the year.

The new cell range is practically finished, and is fully occupied by prisoners. The cement floor of balcony is still to be laid, the delay being caused by the shortage of cement, which has been unobtainable in Christchurch for some five months. On the east side of this range an exercise-yard for trial and remand prisoners has been built. This is 50 ft. by 30 ft., with W.C., urinals, &c., and is completely covered with expanded metal.

The kitchen block is practically completed with the exception of the divisions in the bathroom and fitting up the bakehouse. The electric cooking-apparatus in the kitchen is completed. The bathroom and laundry are also connected with the electric heater in the kitchen. A new transformer is to be installed to supply the necessary energy for cooking, baking, &c.

The improvements to No. 1 temporary block are completed with the exception of plastering the septic tank, which is delayed owing to the shortage of cement.

There are now five concrete-block cottages completed and occupied by officers. These are all connected with the septic tank, electrically lighted, and have hot- and cold-water systems. The Gaoler's residence is nearly completed, being roofed in, but is now waiting for a supply of cement to finish the plastering. The well at the cottages has been completed, and a large 2,000-gallon tank and windmill erected which supplies all the officers' cottages with water. In connection with the building operations a large number of blocks and roofing-tiles, also fencing-posts, have been manufactured, but the industry is held up on account of the cement shortage. A large concrete-block piggery containing twenty sties has also been built nearly roof-high, the completion of which is held up for the same reason. The concrete foundation of a seventh concrete-block cottage has also been laid down. A concrete-block poultry-run has also been erected, consisting of two large hen-houses, incubator-room, and store; also four smaller breeding-houses are in course of erection.

The new road on the boundary of the farm is now nearing completion.

A large amount of fencing has been completed with concrete posts. The old fences have nearly all been removed.

The crops this year consisted of 125 acres of oats, 60 acres wheat, 24 acres barley, 20 acres potatoes, 17 acres mangolds, 2 acres horse-carrots, 1 acre partridge peas, 30 acres turnips, 10 acres rape, 40 acres lucerne, 5 acres tall oat-grass, 5 acres sheep-burnet, 30 acres laid down in grass.

Cash credits amounting to £2,484 5s. 4d. were received and paid into the Public Account. £229 was received for sale of pigs. 547 lambs were bred on the farm, and realized the sum of £656 8s. 10d. With the exception of 206 ewes, all the old flock of sheep have been sold and replaced with two-, four-, and six-tooth ewes. The flock now consists of 1,000 ewes and twenty rams. £332 was received for wool and skins, £254 1s. for roofing-tiles and paving-blocks, £95 5s. 2d. for vegetables, £104 5s. 4d. for meat and rations to officers, £368 10s. 3d. for cull ewes, £327 10s. 3d. for wheat.

Fire practice has taken place weekly during the year.

The conduct of the staff has been very satisfactory. One officer was dismissed for misconduct.

I regret having to record the death of Warder George Protheroe from pneumonia, the after-effects of influenza contracted during the epidemic. He was a smart, efficient officer.

ROTO-AIRA ROADMAKING PRISON CAMP.

The work of forming and metalling the Waimarino-Tokaanu Road and bridging the various streams still continue to progress. Work in this district is very seriously hampered by wet weather, and under these circumstances it is not possible to make the progress one would desire.

Early in the year the advance camp was removed from the Whakapapanui Stream to the Mangatepopo Stream—a distance of about seven miles. Road-formation and bridge-building has been pushed on from the latter stream, three bridges being erected, and about three miles of formation was completed, including the long side cutting leading down to the Wanganni River.

A temporary camp was established at Waimarino, where men and teams were kept for the purpose of dealing with the metalling of the section of road near the township. In addition to road-metalling a large quantity of firewood was cut and railed to Wellington, which was found very useful during the winter months when coal was not procurable. The section of road near Waimarino known as Carroll Street was widened from 14 ft. to 20 ft., which improved the road considerably. There is now a fair amount of motor traffic over the road which is in course of construction. This, coupled with the abnormal rainfall, entails a large amount of maintenance work.

Timber for bridges and culverts is still pit-sawn from the bush by prison labour, and in this connection I wish to mention that only first-class timber is used, which adds to the life of all bridges erected.