

WAIKERIA REFORMATORY FOR MEN.

The conduct of the inmates, on the whole, has been very satisfactory, although several were punished for breaches of the regulations. There was only one escape throughout the year, despite the fact that a large number of inmates are working on the honour system. This goes to show the men appreciate the trust bestowed upon them.

The health of the men has been good. One inmate was taken to the hospital with a broken leg in the latter part of 1918, and was brought back to the institution early in January. Other illnesses were of a minor nature, and were treated in the Reformatory by the medical officer.

The progress made with the buildings has been delayed on account of the Railway Department not carrying cement, lime, and timber for some considerable time, and also by the difficulty experienced by the Public Works in supplying some of the lines we order.

The Administrative Wing is finished with the exception of the bathroom. There has been a considerable amount of excavating done on the site, and a new road formed up in front of the building, this latter giving a better access to the Administrative Wing. All paths and roads leading to the site have been metalled.

A start was made during the latter portion of the year with quarters for single officers, and the blocklaying is half completed. A small building of concrete blocks was erected for use as a slaughterhouse, and is finished except for the fixing of two doors. It will be a great improvement on the building at present in use.

One four-roomed cottage has been erected, and a start has been made with the foundations for another residence. This latter should be finished in the early part of next year.

The reservoir, to hold 35,000 gallons of water, is now being plastered, and will be ready for use shortly.

A bowling-green is being provided for the use of the officers, and this I hope to have down in grass by next autumn.

I have had 188 acres cleared, burnt, and stumped. In many instances a great deal of grubbing was required to clear the roots out of the ground before the plough could be got to work. Good progress has been made with the swamp drainage on the north end of the farm, and also with the new vegetable-garden.

A large amount of work has been done in the blacksmith's shop both for the farm and for the Public Works.

The fencing of the Tokanui Mental Hospital Road is well in hand, but there has been considerable delay with the delivery of materials such as posts and battens, of which I have only been able to procure small quantities at a time.

The manufacture of concrete blocks has been carried on when cement was available, and a large number of blocks are now in stock. Several thousand have been carted to the new officer's quarters and to No. 11 cottage. A new tile machine has lately been received, and a start will shortly be made to manufacture tiles. A large number of posts and pipes have been made both for the farm and also the Mental Hospital Road fences.

Telephones have been fixed at the dairy camp, dairy, and Principal Warder's cottage.

A good deal of fencing, in addition to that on the Tokanui Hospital Road, has been done on all parts of the farm, and several large concrete troughs have been built in order to keep the cows well supplied with water in the dry weather. The dairy herd is giving satisfaction, and has been increased from forty to ninety-eight cows. In addition a large number of calves and steers have been reared. The pigs have done very well on the whole, and give promise of better results during the ensuing year. The sows we have—to the number of sixteen—are of a very good class, but when changing our breed we experience great difficulty in purchasing a good class of suitable boar. The poultry department, being only a side line, is paying as well as can be expected. There is not a very large stock on hand at present, as a number were sold in the latter part of the year, these being old birds and young birds unsuitable for laying. In addition several turkeys were disposed of. During the coming year it will be necessary to reduce the size of the poultry-yards in order that a smaller number may be kept together. In this way we will have better results in our breeding-pens. The number of eggs sold was 1,555 dozen, and the average return was 1s. 9½d. per dozen. The number of chickens, turkeys, and ducks on hand at present is 481.

The orchards, both old and new, are looking well. They have received a good deal of attention this year, both in pruning and spraying, hence their fine appearance. As we have now an expert orchardist appointed, next year we should show a fair return for our labour.

The amount of land put down in crops during the twelve months is as follows: 10 acres in soft turnips, 70 acres in oats, 10 acres in potatoes, 3 acres in pumpkins, 4½ acres in wheat, 11 acres in mangolds, 25 acres in swedes, 2 acres in carrots, and 58 acres reserved for hay. Most of the crops are looking well, and the autumn oats have turned out splendidly. The latter have been cut and are now in stock. The potatoes, tomatoes, and tobacco-plants received a severe check, as the frost destroyed all our early crops. The vegetable-garden has been kept in good order, and a large area has been planted out in onions. We have a small nursery of pine and gum trees, and these should be ready for planting out in the coming June, also 10,000 privet-plants for shelter hedges.

The conduct of the officers, on the whole, has been good.

Divine service for the Protestants was conducted by the Revs. Henderson, Shaw, and Carew-Thomas, and for the Roman Catholics by the Rev. Father Jansen.

The Visiting Justices—Mr. Burton (Stipendiary Magistrate), Mr. Teasdale, and Colonel Ryder—visited the Reformatory at intervals, and, in several instances, granted interviews to inmates.

The Rev. Henderson and the members of the Reformatory Aid Society have done excellent work throughout the year in providing suitable concerts and lectures for the inmates, by whom they have been highly appreciated. The piano that was supplied by the Department is certainly one of the chief assets at the concerts.