

In order to meet the additional charges that will be cast upon the Prisons Department by the decision to make this wage-payment, it has also been decided that all work carried out for other Departments must be charged and paid for at its full labour-value.

When the proposed measure of reform has been tested under working-conditions the payment of a standard wage according to results to all classes of prisoners will require to be seriously considered. It is fairly obvious that the differentiation in the method of compensation for similar work under similar conditions will result in discontent and unrest among the inmates of our institutions that will add materially to the difficulties of management.

INSTITUTIONAL SCHOOLS, ETC.

The system of institutional schools has been extended during the year. At the Invercargill Borstal Institution, which has been retained as a place of confinement for young men and youths under twenty-five years of age, the additional instruction to which reference was made in last year's report has been continued. Two well-qualified and experienced Board-school teachers have been employed, and, as shown by their joint report accompanying that of the Officer in Charge at Invercargill, matters have proceeded quite satisfactorily. Similar results are shown at the Auckland Prison, where evening classes have become well established. At the last-named institution an Esperanto class has recently been established under a prisoner who had studied the modern international language by correspondence with a well-known and philanthropic Esperantist at Wellington. The improvement in the mental outlook of the prisoner referred to after a course of intensive study of this subject has been so patent and pronounced that the Administration felt justified in carrying the experiment further. The need for an intellectual outlook for the prisoners in some definite direction has been keenly felt for some time past, and the timely aid of the gentleman referred to has enabled the Department to find a vent for the stifled intellectual aspirations of some of the long-sentenced prisoners, whose drab existence was formerly unrelieved by any outside interests. The progress of this, our latest experiment, will be watched with considerable interest. In the latter part of 1919 applications were called for the position of full-time schoolmaster at the Waikeria Reformatory, and an appointment was made. The intention was that the appointee should instruct the children of the institutional officers in the daytime and the inmates at night. Unfortunately the gentleman selected obtained a more remunerative appointment before the date fixed for the opening of the school. Upon his resignation the appointment was conferred upon another experienced teacher, but immediately after reporting at Waikeria he became ill, had to undergo an operation, and is reported as medically unfit to take up his duties until August at the earliest. Continued delays of this nature are disappointing, but it is hoped that long before the next report is written the school at Waikeria will be in full operation.

GENERAL PROGRESS DURING THE YEAR.

Institutional.

For some years past the Administration has been desirous of extending the scope of reformatory work in the special institutions at Invercargill and Waikeria, but this could not be done without effecting a more or less complete departure from the older prison methods. This had already been effected to some extent at Invercargill, but circumstances beyond our control had prevented us from going as far as we wished. We were enabled, however, to make certain changes in the early part of the current year that should result in our declared policy being carried out sympathetically and satisfactorily. At Invercargill a distinct advance has already been made, and it is hoped that in twelve months' time the institution will be running on purely "Borstal" lines. Your approval of the provision of a swimming-bath, recreation-ground, recreation-room, and other items of a similar kind, together with the purchase of a complete library, will assist us greatly in building up character and physique in the youthful material we are handling. Your agreement to the appointment of an experienced Mental Hospital Superintendent as head of the Waikeria Reformatory should also enable us to improve our system at that institution and to make a definite departure from older prison methods. This gentleman's appointment is, however, of such recent date that it has not yet been possible to lay down any scheme of management for the future. No doubt there will be definite data to work upon within the next twelve months.

Hitherto any progress we have been able to chronicle has been mainly on the male side, but during recent months we have been making better provision for female prisoners than was previously considered possible. Advantage has been taken of the additional outlet provided for male prisoners by the opening of the Wi Tako Prison Camp at Trentham to convert the two cell buildings at Point Halswell, Wellington, into first-class quarters for the women prisoners at Wellington. It is true that the accommodation provided is of a semi-temporary character owing to the objection that has been raised to the continuance of a permanent prison at the entrance to Wellington Harbour, but by carrying out the whole work by prison labour under the control and direction of prison officers a complete metamorphosis in the buildings and approaches has been effected at a comparatively low cost. The site is a splendid one, and when the women prisoners enter into occupation their accommodation and their surroundings will exceed in comfort, healthfulness, and convenience anything of the kind we have had previously.

Works.

The progress in works is dealt with in detail in the report of the Inspector and Works Supervisor. The main proposals for the year are the establishment of an up-to-date metal-crushing plant at Auckland, and of brickworks at the Wi Tako Camp, Trentham. Stone-quarries have been worked for many years at the Mount Eden Prison, Auckland, but owing to the obsolete