

measure. Dr. Gribben has now taken up his residence at Waikeria, where he will fill the dual position of Superintendent of the Waikeria Reformatory and Medical Superintendent of the Tokanui Mental Hospital. The two institutions are within a few miles of one another, and as the properties are contiguous he will have little difficulty in supervising both places.

Mr. W. T. Leggett, acting Officer in Charge of the Invercargill Borstal Institution, has been promoted to the position of Deputy Superintendent at Waikeria.

It having been found impossible to secure a man with the requisite qualifications to fill the long-vacant position of Superintendent of the Invercargill Borstal Institution, the Department deemed it advisable to appoint a Deputy Superintendent in the person of Mr. H. J. Bathgate, late of the Burnham Industrial School, and to place the general management of the institution under the control of Inspector M. Hawkins, until such time as a more permanent arrangement could be made. Mr. Hawkins visits Invercargill at frequent intervals, and, ably assisted by Mr. Bathgate, is carrying out the Department's scheme of reorganization. Both officers have had long experience of this class of work, and from present indications their efforts are likely to meet with success.

The conduct of the staffs generally has been satisfactory, but in order to enforce discipline and order certain compulsory resignations have been necessary, and some fines have been inflicted. The Superintendents, Gaolers, and officers in charge have loyally supported the Department in carrying out the various works in hand, and in controlling the different institutions effectively. The thanks of the Department are due to them for the high level of efficiency that has been maintained.

MORTALITY AND OTHER FIGURES.

Deaths and Health Statistics.

Nine prisoners died during the year. The general health statistics show that the daily average number of inmates on the sick-list was 16·49, compared with 24·64 in 1918 and 16·71 in 1917. The difference in the figures for 1918 is no doubt accounted for by the fact that in that year the prisons suffered to some extent from the effects of the influenza epidemic. Under ordinary circumstances the general health of the prisoners can hardly be other than good under institutional control, the major part of the sickness and resultant mortality being due to causes arising prior to the offenders' committal.

Escapes.

The number of escapes (eleven) was greater than usual, but all but two of them were from parties working in the open. In this connection it must be remembered that under the present system by far the larger proportion of our prison population is employed on farm-work, or under similar semi-free conditions. In fact, a partial honours system is followed in regard to those prisoners whose escape would not be a menace to the community. To effectively guard all the men so employed would require triple our present staffs, and to mount special guards over every man would largely defeat the end we have in view. It would be quite impossible to build up the self-respect and self-reliance of the men committed to our charge if we had to treat them as irresponsible beings unworthy of trust. Really dangerous criminals are kept within the four walls of the central prisons. Escapes occasionally take place from such places, as they do from the strongest prisons in other countries; but if such escapes are due in any way to the carelessness or negligence of prison officers, condign punishment follows.

PRISONERS DETENTION ACT, 1915.

Only two prisoners, one male and one female, were dealt with under the provisions of the Prisoners Detention Act during the year, by being detained for curative treatment beyond the term of their sentences. There were a few other cases of venereal disease, but as the prisoners affected were imprisoned for longer periods there was no occasion to detain them after the expiration of their sentences. The total number of persons who have been treated as "detainees" since the passing of the Act in 1915 is now twenty-one.

GENERAL PROBATION WORK AND PREVENTION OF CRIME.

The work of our honorary Probation Officers in the chief centres of population is not now confined, as was formerly the case, to receiving monthly calls from the probationers reporting to them and undertaking no further responsibility regarding them. Our present Probation Officers exercise as careful supervision as possible over the habits and lives of all the first offenders and other classes of probationers committed to their charge. By their constant care of such cases they are brought into touch with the homes and connections of the probationers, and are thus enabled to assist quietly but effectively in social reform, and therefore in matters that have a direct bearing upon the prevention of crime.

I have drawn attention in previous reports to the grave necessity that exists for the establishment of a central Department to control and co-ordinate the various branches of different existing Departments that deal with the treatment of persons of both sexes and all ages that are brought before the Courts, and also with the question of social reform and general preventive measures. I have pointed out how, in regard to probation and other work of that nature, there is much overlapping, diffusion of energy, and wastage that would be avoided if the whole business were under one management. In the absence of such a Department, members of the public who interest themselves in assisting the neglected, the derelict, and the destitute find that they have no permanent organization to appeal to when difficult cases require to be dealt with. The only appeal at present appears to be to the police, and the only place to which the derelict and destitute can