

SESSION II.
1921.
NEW ZEALAND.

PRISONS

(REPORT ON) FOR THE YEAR 1920-21.

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

The Hon. the MINISTER IN CHARGE OF THE PRISONS DEPARTMENT to His Excellency the GOVERNOR-GENERAL.

MY LORD,—

Wellington, 17th August, 1921.

I have the honour to submit to Your Excellency the report of the Prisons Department for the year 1920-21.

I have, &c.,

E. P. LEE,

Minister in Charge of Prisons Department.

The CONTROLLER-GENERAL OF PRISONS to the Hon. the MINISTER IN CHARGE OF PRISONS DEPARTMENT.

SIR,—

Prisons Department, Wellington, 31st July, 1921.

I have the honour to present the fortieth annual report of the Prisons Department, for the year 1920-21, together with the criminal statistics for the calendar year ended 31st December, 1920.

PRISON POPULATION: COMPARATIVE FIGURES.

An analysis of the criminal statistics for 1920 shows that 3,491 offenders were received into prison during the year, compared with 3,207 for the previous twelve months, an increase of 284; while the daily average number of prisoners in all the prisons of the Dominion worked out at 939·69 for 1920, against 1,004·34 for 1919 and 981·95 for 1918. In comparing the figures for the three years it must, however, be remembered that in 1918 and 1919 the number of inmates of the prisons and prison institutions was largely augmented by the presence of a considerable percentage of military court-martialled prisoners who could not be legitimately classed as criminals. In order, therefore, to arrive at a proper estimate of the increase or decrease in the criminal population it is necessary to deduct from the figures for the three years the daily average number of persons who were serving sentences for purely military offences (failure to enlist, refusal to serve in the Forces, &c.). All offenders in this category were discharged before the end of 1920, except two who were sentenced to long terms by military Courts-martial outside the Dominion for serious civil offences (manslaughter and attempted murder). The daily average number of military court-martialled prisoners for 1920 was 34·07, for 1919 192·80, and for 1918 222·928. The average criminal population is therefore reduced to 905·62 in 1920, to 811·54 in 1919, and to 759·022 in 1918. There was thus an actual increase of 94·08, or 11·58 per cent., in the daily average number of criminal prisoners over the figures for 1919, and 146·59, or 19·31 per cent., over 1918. In 1913, the last complete period before the war, the daily average prison population was 893·24, or 12·38 less than for the year under review. I drew attention in my last year's report to the satisfactory decrease in the daily average number of criminals in our prisons in 1919 compared with the pre-war year, but pointed out that we were then "floating upon a wave of apparent prosperity" that probably accounted for this somewhat