

have been arranged to permit of a suitable system of classification, and the individual women are employed on whatever work they are most adapted for. Gardening, dairying, poultry-rearing, sewing, and knitting are some of the everyday employments, and every encouragement is given the inmates to acquire a knowledge of useful work.

Concerts have been provided at intervals for the entertainment of the inmates, the Official Visitors taking an active part in this work. The same ladies also visit the institution weekly, giving the inmates short lectures on useful and interesting topics, and advising and assisting those about to be released.

As it will be necessary to provide better accommodation for the staff at this institution, arrangements have been made for the removal from Mount Cook Reserve of a good six-roomed house and its re-erection at Point Halswell. The house is now being re-erected and will shortly be occupied.

#### MORTALITY AND OTHER FIGURES.

There were ten deaths in the whole of the prisons and prison institutions during the year. The general health statistics show that the daily average number of inmates on the sick-list was 13.58, compared with 16.49 in 1919, and 24.64 in 1918 (the epidemic year). As stated in former reports, the general health of the prisoners under a well-conducted institutional system can hardly be other than good, although the average is sometimes made to appear unsatisfactory by the presence in the prison infirmaries, and in the public hospitals on transfer from the prisons, of cases of chronic illness from which individual prisoners have been suffering long prior to their reception. There is also a class of derelicts who are committed to prison more on account of infirmity than of criminality. Naturally, cases of this nature spend the greater part of their time on the sick-list.

#### ESCAPES.

There were thirteen escapes during the year, compared with eleven in the previous year; but, as has been pointed out previously, it is only to be expected that under the free open-air system that is followed in the management of the majority of our institutions a percentage of the prisoners so treated will fail to respond to the trust reposed in them, and will evade supervision. As no dangerous criminals are ever sent to our country institutions, or permitted the restricted liberty enjoyed by the milder offenders, "escapes" do not constitute in any way a menace to public safety.

#### PRISONERS DETENTION ACT, 1915.

Only three prisoners were detained for curative treatment beyond the terms of their sentences during the year. The total number who have been brought under the provisions of the Act since it was first passed is now twenty-four.

#### DEPARTMENTAL AND STAFF MATTERS.

Owing to the larger volume of work carried out by the Department during the year it has been found necessary to add slightly to the Head Office and branch staffs, but no addition has been made until continued efficiency absolutely demanded it. The appointment of an Office Inspector and Accountant was made after the end of the financial year, the office inspection and accountancy work of the Department having grown beyond the capacity of the existing staff. It also became necessary to appoint an experienced man to manage the metal-quarry at Mount Eden. Both appointments have already been justified by results. Applications have been called for the position of brickworks-manager at Wi Tako (Trentham), where extensive clay deposits are now being opened up, but no suitable candidates have yet come forward. Hitherto we have carried out all our works and industries with our own untrained staffs, but as their magnitude increased it was found that to maintain efficiency and to obtain the best commercial results skilled assistance must be secured.

In my last year's report I referred to the difficulty we had experienced in keeping our staffs up to strength, and our still greater difficulty in obtaining the services of men who were suitable for our work. The present position is that, while we have enough candidates coming forward to fill vacancies, our second difficulty is not appreciably lessened, nor in all human probability will it ever be; it is the common experience of all prison administrations throughout the world, and it is hardly to be expected that we should be exempt from the common trouble. It is encouraging, however, to find that the officers generally are responding to the changed environment that now exists, and the management of the prisons and the methods of controlling and treating the prisoners are improving correspondingly.

The controlling officers of the different prisons and prison institutions have shown a commendable desire to assist the administration in carrying out the various reforms, works, and improvements that have been undertaken during the year, and their loyalty has been beyond praise. The conduct of the staffs generally has been satisfactory, while the assiduity and conscientious work of many of our individual officers of lower rank has contributed materially in bringing about the results obtained by the Department during the year.

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Controller-General of Prisons.