

Wellington Prisons.

Terrace Prison.—Gardening and excavation work have been the principal occupations of those detained at this prison. The excavation of the site of a new infants' school was completed early in the year, and the building has since been erected. A party of prisoners is being employed road-making, fencing, &c., at Point Halswell, where a considerable amount of good work has been carried out.

Mount Cook Prison.—This prison was closed on the 29th October, 1921, but a party of prisoners is being conveyed there daily in a closed van to carry out the demolition of old buildings, assist in the transferring of machinery and materials to other institutions, and to complete the excavation of the technical-school site. A considerable number of second-hand bricks obtained from demolished buildings and excavations at Mount Cook were sold, and realized £763.

Wi Tako Prison, Trentham.

During the past year a sixteen-chambered Hoffman brick-kiln was built, and is now in working-order. The new kiln has a burning-capacity of 80,000 bricks per week, and, as there is practically an inexhaustible supply of good clay available, bricks in large quantities will shortly be turned out. It is satisfactory to record that all the bricks used in the erection of the new kiln and chimney-stack were made on the site by prison labour.

In the swamp area of the reserve drains have been dug, and connected with contour drains cut around the foot of the hills. The completion of this work has had a most beneficial effect on the swamp land, which has been cleared of blackberry, flax, &c. Excellent crops of turnips and mangolds are now to be seen on this area, and about 30 acres sown in grass is showing up satisfactorily.

The general conduct and industry of the prisoners have been very good, and it is satisfactory to record that there has been little or no illness among them during the year.

Prison Institutions for Women.

Addington Reformatory for Women.—A number of the younger women offenders were transferred during the year to the Point Halswell Reformatory and replaced by older offenders. The structural arrangements at this institution make it more suitable for the older and more hardened offenders, and the majority of those now detained here are of the latter class.

The inmates have been kept fully employed, the principal work being gardening and washing, both for this institution and for the Paparua Prison.

An effort is being made to obtain a suitable situation for every inmate on discharge, and lady Official Visitors are doing very good work in finding employment and visiting the women before and after their release.

Point Halswell Reformatory.—In order to provide more accommodation for the younger women offenders who are being transferred from other centres to this institution, the quarters previously used by the staff have been turned into inmates' cubicles, and the staff has been well provided for by the re-erection of an eight-roomed dwelling transferred from the Mount Cook Prison Reserve.

Gardening and dairying continue to be the main sources of employment, whilst some of the younger inmates, who are housed in an excellent building entirely apart from other women, are taught sewing, fancy-work, &c., in a well-appointed workroom. The dairying industry is being carried on satisfactorily by the women, and a number of them take a keen interest in this work and also in poultry-rearing.

The Lady Official Visitors pay weekly visits to the institution, while a number of women social workers, including members of the Women Prisoners' Welfare Group, visit the institution regularly and interest themselves in the welfare of inmates, obtaining employment for them on release, and generally assisting them in the work of rehabilitation.

HEALTH OF PRISONERS.

The figures in regard to sickness are given in Table A, and show a daily average of 15.95 on the sick-list during the year, as against 13.58 in the previous year and 16.49 in 1919. As pointed out in previous reports, the statistics in regard to sickness are not a reliable indication of the general health of prisoners. Old vagrants are often committed to prison when found destitute and ill, and it frequently happens that they are on the sick-list from the date of their admission until near the time for their discharge. Such cases increase the institutional returns of sickness, and are a source of trouble and responsibility to the staffs, as well as being expensive to the Department.

PRISONERS DETENTION ACT, 1915.

Two prisoners—one male and one female—were dealt with under the provisions of the Prisoners Detention Act during the past year. There were other cases, but, as the prisoners affected were serving long terms, it was not necessary to detain them after the due date of discharge. The total number of persons who have been detained after the expiration of their sentences under the provisions of the Prisoners Detention Act is now 26.