

1925.

NEW ZEALAND

P R I S O N S

(REPORT ON) FOR THE YEAR 1924-25.

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.

Wellington, 10th August, 1925.

I HAVE the honour to submit to Your Excellency the report of the Prisons Department for the year
1924-25.

I have, &c.,

C. J. PARR,

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, 6th August, 1925.

I have the honour to present the forty-fourth annual report of the Prisons Department, covering the financial year 1924-25, together with extracts from the reports of the controlling officers of the different prison institutions, reports regarding the activities of Prisoners Aid Societies in the larger centres, and the criminal statistics for the calendar year ended 31st December, 1924.

PRISON POPULATION : COMPARATIVE FIGURES.

The returns furnished by the Government Statistician, which appear as an appendix to this report, show that the number of distinct persons received into the prisons and prison institutions of the Dominion during the year ended 31st December, 1924, was 3,966, compared with 3,957 in 1923 and 3,830 in 1922. The daily average number of prisoners in custody in the whole of the prison institutions for the year 1924 was 1,196·49, against 1,127·47 in 1923—an increase of 69·02. Although the latter figures indicate an increase in the prison population, it is satisfactory to find that the proportion of offenders to the Dominion's total population shows little or no increase. In 1914 the proportion of criminals (excluding Maoris) per 10,000 of mean population was 31·05, as compared with 17·78 in 1924. It will be observed that last year there were fewer offenders under the age of twenty years than in either 1923 or 1922, but as a set-off against this there is a marked increase in the number of offenders who were over the age of forty years. It is difficult to account for the increase in older offenders, and more particularly as a large proportion of them had not previously been convicted of any offence. There has been little movement in the criminal population during the past year calling for special comment, but it is evident that crime in proportion to population is not increasing.

The results of the Department's efforts in the treatment of male offenders at the Invercargill and Waikeria institutions have been recorded during the past nine years. Youthful offenders only have been dealt with at the Invercargill Borstal Institution, but men of all ages—principally well-conducted prisoners and first offenders—have been in detention at Waikeria. The departmental statistics show that of youths who served terms of reformatory detention at the Invercargill institution between the 1st January, 1916, and the 31st December, 1924, only 6·64 per cent. were reconvicted for further offences. Of those who served terms of hard labour to be followed by reformatory detention during the same period 11·11 per cent. were reconvicted, which would indicate that the offenders whose cases were considered less hopeful by the Courts were given terms of hard labour. During the nine years to the 31st December last 1,247 youths passed through the Invercargill Borstal Institution, and, of these, 77 only were reconvicted, making the percentage of successes 93·83 and failures 6·17.

The results obtained from the Waikeria institution are even more satisfactory, but this is explained by the fact that in the past numerous first offenders of the more hopeful type were detained there, while all classes of young offenders were given a trial at Invercargill before