

fortunate in recapturing two of them in quick time, but the third has so far eluded capture. The two who were recaptured were taken before the Court and sentenced to a further term of imprisonment for escaping.

The spiritual welfare of the men was well attended to by the local ministers of the various denominations. Divine service was held at the camps at frequent intervals by the following reverend gentlemen: Rev. Skey, Rev. Weatherhog, Rev. Harold Datson (Church of England); Rev. Pellow and Rev. Shilton (Presbyterian); and Rev. Father Sweeney (Roman Catholic). The Salvation Army Corps (Raetihi Branch) visited the camp on two occasions, and held service interspersed with musical items.

Turning to the industrial side of the Waikune Prison, I consider that the standard of progress of past years has been maintained. As in previous years, our activities are largely in connection with roadworks. During the year 1928 approximately four miles of the Te Kuiti - Bulls (via Taumarunui) Highway was reformed and metalled. A new bridge of substantial dimensions was erected over the Maungaturuturu. At the latter part of the year a start was made with the new road on the western side of the railway-line between Pokako and Horopito. The class of country encountered on this section is of a swampy nature, which, although it makes for a slow job, should turn out well financially. The construction of the new road will be of great benefit to motorists and others. It will eliminate several "hairpin" bends which the users of the present road have to contend with. The overhead bridge north of Erua Station was erected during the year, and a commencement was made with the fillings on either side of the bridge. Unfortunately, owing to a change in programme of the Public Works Department, work at this point was suspended. Maintenance work in connection with the Waimarino-Tokaanu Road was carried out as in past years. Several stretches of this road had in the past given considerable trouble. The portions of the road in question have been metalled, with the result that the earlier trouble does not now recur, resulting in a considerable saving in maintenance expenditure. The increasing popularity of this locality as a tourist resort, and the fact that the Tokaanu Road is greatly used by motorists on the through Auckland-Wellington trip, has trebled traffic over this road. However, the Department has successfully maintained the road in a satisfactory manner, thus enabling motorists and others to traverse it at all times, and it is often referred to by the various motorists' associations as an "all-weather route." Minor repairs were also effected to the Bruce Road.

The second string of our activities is motor transport. During the year several heavy consignments of manure, grass-seeds, &c., were transported from National Park Railway-station to the prison farms in the Taupo district. Modern methods have been adopted in the carrying of sheep and lambs from Hautu Prison Farm to the railway-station. A special cage, capable of holding thirty or forty sheep or lambs, was constructed, and with such securely fastened to a motor-lorry stock was carried from the farm to the rail. There is no doubt that such a method of transport of small flocks is a vast improvement on the old style of droving. As example: We were recently called on to arrange transport of 128 fat lambs from Hautu Prison Farm to Erua Station—a distance of forty-five miles. With the means at our disposal the whole flock was removed from Hautu to Erua in eighteen hours, and this without the loss of one lamb. Had the old method been in operation it is doubtful whether the journey could have been completed in five days, and then not without reducing the value of the flock. At the latter part of the year operations in connection with the hostel at National Park were begun. The Prisons Department having secured the contract for cartage of material from the rail to the hostel site, will derive considerable financial benefit from that source.

At the present time we have a fleet of fifteen motor-driven vehicles for use on roadworks and general transport work.

The Department has also secured the contract for the supply of crushed metal, gravel, sand, &c., to be used in the construction of the hostel Chateau Tongariro. Good financial results should be obtained from this undertaking.

Our special thanks are due to the organizations who thoughtfully considered the inmates at Waikune Prison during the Christmas season. Parcels of eatables were received from the local Church people, a parcel of cake from the Howard League for Penal Reform, and a package of tobacco from the National Tobacco Co., Ltd., were distributed among the men during Christmas. Another consideration not to be overlooked is the action of the manager, Picture Palace, Raetihi, in screening two picture programmes at Horopito Hall for the benefit of the prisoners in custody at Waikune. The programmes were largely attended, and were much appreciated by the men at this camp. Such concessions, and the topical lecturettes given by several of the visiting clergy, have proved of immense value, for they tend to brighten the otherwise depressing atmosphere of prison institutions.

Reviewing the work of the prison on the whole, I consider that the life in a prison camp tends to improve the men physically and morally, while the industrial side should show equal if not better returns than formerly.

WANGANUI PRISON.

(Gaoler, Mr. E. CHING.)

During the year there were received from all sources 149 males and 9 females, being 29 males and 1 female less than the receptions during 1927. At the commencement of the year there were in custody 32 males, and at the close of the year there remained in detention 35 male prisoners.

Those who were able to do some little work have been employed in the garden, laundry, and general domestic work. Work was found for some men sawing into short lengths some 98 cords of firewood for the Mines Department. This proved to be a good healthy job, and the men took a good interest in the work.