

PAPARUA PRISON.

(Superintendent, Mr. W. T. LEGGETT.)

At the beginning of the year there were 138 males in custody; during the year 586 males were received and 588 were discharged or otherwise disposed of, leaving 136 males in custody at the end of the year. The greatest number in custody at any one time was 162 and the least 118. The daily average number in custody during the year was 133.54.

The health of the prisoners generally has continued very good, there being only four cases of serious illness during the year requiring treatment at the public hospital. One instance was a case of pleurisy with an old-standing miner's phthisis; in another instance, a case of rupture or gastric ulcer, prisoner complained of illness on reception, and shortly after required operative treatment. Another case was duodenal ulcer; and the fourth case was that of an inmate received in very poor condition suffering from cardiac distress. In all instances the men were eventually returned to prison after treatment in the public hospital. There were four males transferred to a mental hospital during the year, and in three cases the terms of imprisonment were completed there, leaving one case still in detention there at the end of the year.

The conduct of the prisoners has been uniformly good, there being no escapes or attempted escapes during the year. There were nineteen cases against fourteen individuals for minor breaches of the prison regulations requiring to be dealt with by Visiting Justices.

The food-supplies have been of excellent quality, and a plentiful supply of vegetables was available from the prison garden. The bread produced in the institutional bakery was of the highest quality, and of the same standard as in public use. The meat-supplies have been mainly from stock supplied from the Invercargill Borstal Institution farm and have been quite satisfactory.

The industries of the prison and farming operations have usefully absorbed all available labour. The farming operations here do not absorb a great deal of the labour available, owing to the larger proportion of the farm being old river-bed and at the best fit only for grazing. Therefore, if it were not for the gravel industry a large number of men could not be found suitable employment. During the year continued supplies of gravel and sand have been disposed of for main-highways construction, to local bodies, Government Departments, and small cartage contractors. During the time the gravel-pit has been in operation a very keen and intelligent interest has been taken by the men employed in connection with the plant and production, and this is reflected in the fact that since such operations were commenced three years ago there has not been any single attempt to escape, although great freedom of action is given to those employed on this industry. The primary object of the gravel industry is the provision of suitable employment, and it is pleasing indeed to find the prisoners build up mentally and physically, thus leading in a number of instances to being able to place them in suitable employment on release.

The manufacture of concrete blocks and fencing-posts for our own requirements and paving-blocks for disposal has been continued during the year. The poultry industry in conjunction with the market-garden has been successfully operated during the year. In addition to providing institutional vegetable requirements, the Health Department at Hanmer Springs has been fully supplied with both vegetables and eggs. Tree replacements in the existing shelter-belts have been provided for from the garden nursery, likewise some of the planting requirements of other institutions have been supplied.

The farming section has again been worked successfully, with satisfactory yields of cereals, roots, &c. The sheep section has again shown good results, with an excellent lambing average of 135 per cent. Our early fat-lamb production was again a feature of the metropolitan market. The wool-clip for the year averaged over 12 lb. per head, but owing to the substantial drop in prices the realization was not up to that of last year. The pig industry has shown a small profit notwithstanding that this market has been at a low ebb for some seasons. The Farm Manager has again obtained good results generally from all sections of the farm.

Various alterations and additions to buildings have been carried out as follows: Additional exercise-yard accommodation for unconvicted prisoners, allowing for better segregation and control; relaying of the bituminous roofing in cells of both the cell ranges; renovation of all cells and corridors of the cell buildings; renovation of various prison residences, with installation of water and sanitary services when required.

The social and spiritual welfare of the prisoners has again been well looked after by ministers of the various denominations who hold weekly services, also by Mr. and Mrs. Smith, of the Richmond Mission, who have continued their periodical evening services, and who still extend their practical sympathy in suitable after-care in a number of cases. The social welfare has been again well evidenced by the weekly Workers' Educational Association classes, and thanks are due to the secretary, Mr. Manning, for his organization, and the lecturers for their services, and Rotary Club members for the provision of conveyance. The Rotary Club has also kindly provided interesting lectures and entertainments. Mrs. Holmes and party have entertained the prisoners monthly with high-class vocal and instrumental items, and these concerts are a feature of the social activities in connection with the prison. The educational side of the institution has been carried on by Mr. W. C. Smith and one of the institutional staff, and steady progress has been maintained, as covered by the Schoolmaster's report herewith.

I am again pleased to be able to report that the officers of the prison as a body have performed their duties very satisfactorily and have taken a keen interest in their work. While maintaining a good standard of discipline, it is owing to their fair and conscientious treatment, with tact and judgment in dealing with prisoners placed under their charge, that so few have required to be punished.

Schoolmaster's Report.

On assuming control of the evening school classes at this prison in February, 1929, I at once noticed the individual differences in the types of men comprising the classes, and after investigation it seemed paramount that as far as possible personal instruction should take the place of class-work, and this has been given effect to during the year with marked results in some cases.