

INVERCARGILL BORSTAL INSTITUTION.

(Superintendent, Mr. C. G. L. POLLOCK.)

At the beginning of the year there were 230 inmates in custody, 224 of whom were Borstal inmates and 6 inmates of the Invercargill Prison. During the year 107 inmates were received into the Borstal Institution and 144 inmates were discharged or otherwise disposed of, leaving 187 males in custody at the 31st December, 1929; 93 males and 3 females were received into the prison and 92 males and 3 females discharged or otherwise disposed of, leaving 7 males in custody at the end of the year. 117 Borstal inmates were released on the recommendation of the Parole Board, and 19 discharged on the expiration of their terms of detention under section 16 of the Borstal Institutions Establishment Act. The daily average number of inmates in custody was 199.32 in the Borstal Institution and 9.69 in the prison.

The conduct and industry of the inmates have been very good.

Twenty-five Borstal inmates were admitted to the Southland Hospital during the year. Unfortunately, one of the lads who had only a short time previously been admitted to the institution died after a short period in the hospital. On the whole the health of the inmates has been good.

Occupational Training by Day.—The preliminary reclaiming and draining operations on the occupied estuary lands being now well advanced, farming and dairying proceed on an improved footing. Instruction is kept in touch with directed observation of processes and results. Additional special instruction in agriculture as imparted in a Saturday class is elsewhere referred to. Increasing interest marks the activities of those engaged in this division. That applies even more to the gardening, in which nursery and experimental work as well as a wide range of horticulture evoke the best efforts of the learners. The other occupations taught and put to regular or occasional use within the institution are carpentry, blacksmithing, shoemaking, painting, plumbing, bricklaying, baking, and butchering. The manner in which the wants of the institution in respect of these trades are met from within is substantial evidence of the progress made.

Evening Instruction.—Technical classes in carpentry, bricklaying, and signwriting, under the instruction of our own officers, have been held regularly throughout the year. When the new workshops have been erected it will be possible to extend further the range of work taken up in this section. Under three outside teachers, school classes, which have been regularly conducted throughout the year, gave instruction efficiently in English (including literature, oral and written composition), arithmetic, geography, history, and drawing. The interested co-operation of the pupils was well maintained and definite progress made. Singing, which was introduced this year, proved a valuable leaven: for example, what was learned in the class was turned to acceptable account in the entertainments organized among the lads during the year.

The Southland Branch of the Workers' Education Association continues to take interest in our educational needs. During the winter months Mr. F. C. Lopdell, M.A., conducted a very successful class of thirty pupils in elementary economics. Mr. Lopdell, whose recent promotion to Vice-Principal of the Auckland Training College deprives us of a greatly appreciated teacher, reports in the following terms: "This class [economics] has done a year's work which for individual study as well as socialized effort has been even more successful than that of the previous year. While the class has been willing to throw itself heart and soul into the economic studies which lend themselves to debate, it has been equally ready to pursue the less attractive groundwork studies on which real progress depends. The tone of the class and discipline generally are remarkably good. The lecturer has no difficulty at all in this respect, and his work is made pleasant on account of the spirit of inquiry and the good will which is very evident."

Saturday Instruction — Wool-classing and Agriculture.—We are again under deep obligation to Mr. T. Mathews, agricultural instructor to the Southland Education Board, for his voluntary services in conducting two special Saturday morning classes, the first in wool-classing, the second in agriculture, the instruction in both cases being practical as well as theoretical. The work shown in the agricultural plots wins unqualified commendation from those competent to judge. The detached well-lighted building for wool-classing provides exceptional facilities, which are reflected in work of exceptional quality. In the course of his report on this class Mr. Mathews says: "The results of the examination as a whole are most pleasing, and the percentage gained by the first three students speaks for itself. No doubt you will be surprised at a student gaining the possible marks, but I have been unable to trace one error, and, considering the time available, fail to see how the paper could be improved upon. This is the first occasion in my experience that any student has been awarded full marks." The two classes here referred to have proved among the most popular in the institution, showing that, under suitable conditions, practical education connected with rural industries can be at once efficient and attractive. Acknowledgments are again made to the Reginald Mackinnon Trustees, who yearly provide special prizes for the best work in wool-classing.

Library.—Both numerically and in respect of its educational values the library continues to expand. During the year, friends presented to the institution 453 books, many of which are quite new, the rest being in good order. They are all modern publications of such character that none of them are likely to be dead stock in the collection. The reading-matter was further enriched by gifts of magazines to the number of 829. Bookbinding done in the institution has proved of service, 103 books, showing wear-and-tear, being rebound, while 311 magazines of more than passing value were bound. There are now 2,364 volumes in the library, 1,993 being fiction and 331 other literature. As in public libraries, the tastes of readers show preference for light fiction, but there is a demand also for informative works and practical manuals. One of the donors, Mr. Charles Gilbertson, who presented nineteen volumes of Pitman's Common Commodities Series, invited readers of any of these volumes to furnish written answers to the following two questions: "(1) What subjects in the book