

During the year a number of sharp earthquake shocks were experienced, that on the evening of the 5th May being the most severe. All lights failed and the experience was rather alarming until the lights were restored. Hurricane lamps have now been provided for use in cases of emergency. It is pleasing to state however that the quakes are becoming less frequent.

There were no escapes from custody during the year.

The conduct of the prisoners has been good.

The thanks of the Department are due to Mr. Magill, of the Gospel Hall, and to Mr. J. P. Thomson for their gifts of extra eatables to the prisoners at Christmas and New Year, also to Mr. Husheer of the National Tobacco Co. for his gift of tobacco.

NEW PLYMOUTH PRISON.

(Superintendent, Mr. W. DINEEN.)

At the beginning of the year there were 54 prisoners in custody. During the year 165 males and 1 female were received, making a total of 220 prisoners. During the same period 162 males and 1 female were discharged or transferred, leaving 57 males in custody at the end of the year.

The health of the prisoners has been good and there was no case of serious illness or accident during the year.

There have been no escapes or attempted escapes during the year. The general conduct of the prisoners has been good, and the Visiting Justices have only dealt with three charges of misconduct by prisoners.

The quality of the rations purchased for prisoners use has been very good, and good wholesome food has been provided during the year.

The purchase of stock on the hoof and slaughtering at the prison has been continued with success, and not only has the cost of ration meat been considerably reduced, but an opportunity has been provided whereby three prisoners with no previous experience have become efficient slaughtermen. The fact that hides sold by auction from here have realized top market rates is the surest indication of how well the skinning has been carried out.

All the bread used is made in the prison and is of first-class quality. Here again advantage has been taken to instruct three inexperienced prisoners to the extent that they are now sufficiently advanced to be able to turn out bread of good quality. In this respect we are under a debt of gratitude to Mr. Somerton, a master baker of this town, who has given freely of his time to instruct these men in the latest methods of baking. He has visited the prison early and late to give practical demonstrations of the process of dealing with dough at different periods in the manufacture of bread.

It has been previously pointed out that the peculiar type of mentality of the special class of prisoners detained in this prison is apt to become very depressed and morose under ordinary prison routine. To help to overcome this difficulty and with the idea of giving these prisoners plenty of good clean bright subjects to think and talk about, more entertainments and lectures are given here than would perhaps be permitted at an ordinary prison. Most of these entertainments have been provided by the Rotary Club under the leadership of the Official Visitor (Mr. P. V. E. Stainton).

Mrs. Eason has continued her weekly visits to men who wish to see her, and by her kind motherly advice has been the means of considerable help to many men, more especially to some when they are inclined to get discontented and morose.

Quarry operations have been continued, but the Borough Council have found it necessary to curtail expenditure, with the result that cash returns from this source have decreased. However, every effort has been made to keep overhead charges down to a minimum and as no machinery is used, and all work is carried out by prison labour, the money received from the sales of quarry material is all profit.

A gang of men is constantly employed in the prison garden and full supplies of vegetables are always available for the prison use. All surplus vegetables are sold by public auction, but this year the prices received were extremely low, and while the output from the garden has been considerably increased the sales returns are down by £100 in comparison with last year.

PAPARUA PRISON.

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

At the beginning of the year there were 168 males in custody. During the year 794 males were received and 806 males were discharged or otherwise disposed of, leaving 156 males in custody at the end of the year. The daily average for the year was 173.14. There were 26 more receptions than during the previous year, the increase being more than accounted for by a number of offenders committed here for besetting and attempting to create disorder.

The health of the prisoners generally has been good, few cases of illness occurring. There were ten cases requiring treatment at the Public Hospital during the year and in two of these cases operative treatment was necessary for hernia and appendicitis. There was one death at the institution during the year, this being the case of an elderly prisoner suddenly expiring from heart failure. There were two cases requiring transfer to a mental hospital during the year and in both instances the men were mentally affected at reception.

The conduct of the prisoners generally has been very good, there being no escapes and one attempted escape of a rather mild nature by an individual running across a paddock in full view of his officer and being promptly recaptured. Disciplinary punishment for breaches of regulations was administered by Visiting Justices in fifty-five cases, being mostly of a minor nature. On the whole, the prisoners have worked well and have as far as possible been employed in connection with farming operations and clearing the stones off the river-bed portion of the farm, and this has effected considerable improvement for the use of farm implements in this stony area. The maintenance of prison