

male prisoners in custody at the end of the year. The daily average number in custody during the year was 16, which is 4 lower than last year. Probably this may be accounted for by the fact that the unemployment camps have drawn all single men out of town, in addition to the town being back to normal after the exodus of men who were here during the building boom.

One prisoner awaiting trial escaped during the year but was retaken within a few minutes. He was afterwards sent to the district hospital and eventually sent to the mental hospital for observation. There were no other admissions to the public hospital, the health of the prisoners being very good.

The conduct and industry of the prisoners was very satisfactory.

Owing to the necessity for strict economy, very little expenditure was incurred in maintenance of the prison buildings, although everything has been kept in a state of repair with the means available.

Our vegetable garden continues to supply sufficient vegetables for our requirements. We have a larger area than usual planted with potatoes, and, owing to a favourable season, should have sufficient potatoes for a considerable time, in addition to supplying the requirements of Gisborne Prison. Our onion crop is again very successful, and we anticipate having sufficient to last until the next season's crop is ready.

The quarry continues to absorb practically all our labour and is our main source of revenue, although our sales have dropped considerably due to the fact that restoration of the buildings in Napier is now practically complete and the streets and pavements are all relaid. In addition, the slip on the Bluff Hill has provided the Council with certain classes of material which they have used in building operations. We have made sufficient soap for our own requirements in addition to supplying a quantity to Gisborne Prison. Breadmaking has been continued very successfully, and the bread has been of good quality.

Divine services were conducted by ministers of the various denominations weekly, and the Salvation Army band visited once a month throughout the year.

Thanks are due to the following gentlemen for their help in assisting prisoners on discharge: Captain Squires, of the Church Army; Adjutant Goffin, of the Salvation Army; and the Rev. Mr. Olds; as well as members of the St. Vincent de Paul Society.

The Rev. Mr. Olds and members of the Napier Brotherhood entertained the men with community sings and talks fortnightly throughout the year which were much enjoyed and always well attended. Frequently I provided wireless broadcasts of the football matches from Wellington and elsewhere, in addition to broadcasts of other programmes.

The thanks of the Department are due to Mr. Magill, of the Gospel Hall, and to Mr. J. P. Thomson for their gifts of cakes, &c., to the prisoners at Christmas, also to Mr. Husheer for his gift of tobacco.

During the year Mr. A. E. Bedford, J.P., was appointed a Visiting Justice to the prison in place of Mr. C. J. Steevens, who has left the district.

In conclusion, I desire to express my appreciation of the behaviour and help of the staff throughout the year.

NEW PLYMOUTH PRISON.

(Superintendent, Mr. W. DINEEN.)

There were 57 prisoners in custody at the beginning of the year, 150 were received, 96 were discharged, and 47 were handed to the police, leaving in custody at the end of the period 64 prisoners. The daily average number for the year was 62.52, the greatest number in confinement at any one time was 71, and the least number in confinement at any one time was 52.

The health of the prisoners has been good. The Medical Officer has made regular visits not less than once a week, and all prisoners who desire to consult him are free to do so. One man was received suffering from serious locomotive disability as the result of an accident prior to arrest. He had been in hospital and discharged requiring the help of crutches and an iron aid to his leg. On the recommendation of the Medical Officer the man was transferred to the public hospital at New Plymouth for operative treatment, and it is pleasant to be able to report that, as result of an unusual and skilful operation, he is now practically restored to his normal health, and walks around without artificial aids. During the year one man died. He was serving his second life term, and was very old and feeble.

The conduct of the great majority of the prisoners has been excellent, and the necessity of calling in the aid of the Visiting Justice has been confined to one or two agitators, and for comparatively minor prison offences. There were no escapes or attempted escapes during the year.

Work in the quarry has continued, but the sale of metal to the New Plymouth Borough Council has somewhat diminished in comparison with previous years. The prison garden has provided useful and beneficial work for many men. Full and plentiful supplies of vegetables have been made available for the prison rations, and the surplus amounts have been sold by auction.

It has been deemed advisable to continue the efforts to counteract the feeling of restless depression that is apt to prevail among men subject to the temptations, and mental instability, such as are the type of men at New Plymouth Prison. With this end in view and with the assistance and co-operation of many citizens, lectures and concerts have been frequent occurrences. The Rotary Club have appointed a special committee, with Mr. W. H. Hamilton as convener, to assist in this work, and they have provided two nights entertainment each month. Mr. Stainton, Official Visitor, has continued to take an active part in these activities, and he can always be relied upon to give willing assistance in organizing entertainments, &c. Mrs. Eason has also continued her weekly motherly visits; she has always been a means of much assistance to every one.

The physical-culture class has been continued under the leadership of one of the prisoners, and has been a very great benefit to all who take part in it.

The spiritual welfare of the men has been cared for by the different denominations. Divine service is held on each Sunday, and, in addition to this, the Salvation Army hold a weekly Bible class.