

PRISONS AND PENAL INSTITUTIONS: EPITOME OF REPORTS OF CONTROLLING OFFICERS.

AUCKLAND PRISON.

(Superintendent, Mr. J. DICKISON.)

At the commencement of the year there were 329 males and 16 females in custody. During the year 1,054 males and 53 females were received, whilst 1,095 males and 49 females were discharged or otherwise disposed of, leaving in the prison on the night of 31st December, 1934, 288 males and 20 females.

Mention was made in my last year's report of a decrease of 402 receptions in 1933 as compared with 1932.

In the year under review there has been a further falling off in this respect, the receptions being 152 less than in the previous year, a total of 554 in the past two years.

This, I think, is significant of the continued value of the avenues of employment offering under the Unemployment Relief Scheme, for many men, who in the past whilst out of work and at a loose end indulged in minor offences, are now in constant work in the various camps.

There is also not the slightest doubt that the splendid co-ordination between the various after-care societies during recent years has contributed in a large measure to the ex-prisoner having a greatly increased chance of making good. In many instances work has been provided immediately upon release, and the men concerned have accepted the opportunity of rehabilitating themselves by remaining clear of former criminal associations which invariably lead to early return to prison.

One prisoner who escaped from a party working in the open was recaptured by the police within a few days and returned to prison.

The extreme penalty of the law was carried out in one instance only during the twelve months under review.

Three inmates died whilst undergoing treatment at the district hospital, whilst one died in the prison infirmary.

The previous splendid standard of health has been well maintained during the year, a fact which is confirmed by the figures from the daily sick muster, which read: Daily average of males sick, 5; females, 0.734.

With a daily average of 350 prisoners in custody, and the reception of 1,107 individuals during the twelve months, the low rate of sickness clearly demonstrates the attention which is given to the all-important matter of the prisoners' health during confinement. Quite a number of individuals are in a frail state of health on admission, and in many instances require extended medical treatment to restore them to a proper state of fitness. Allowing further for the number of minor injuries sustained on the works, the low daily average on the sick muster leaves no doubt that the general health of the inmates has been excellent. May I again express my appreciation of the co-operation of the Medical Superintendent of the Auckland Mental Hospital in the matter of expeditiously dealing with mental defectives.

The school, with an average roll number of 20, is held on three nights weekly and continues to be directed by L. Grice, M.A. The annual examination results, as already submitted to you, were again very pleasing and showed the marked progress made by the majority of the prisoners in attendance as the result of the tuition afforded them. The Schoolmaster commented upon the fact that the men concerned had showed very commendable interest and application in the endeavour to improve a somewhat limited knowledge, the rate of progress varying widely when considering the pupils individually.

Evening drill has been continued three nights weekly under the instruction of a prison officer, the prisoners participating in the exercise benefiting considerably therefrom, particularly as they are employed indoors daily.

The whole of the requisite maintenance of the prison buildings has been effected during the year with prison labour, a good deal of the work being executed around the prison, whilst the upkeep of the prison officers' cottages has received adequate attention.

The garden continues to be a valuable asset, the whole of the institutional requirements of vegetables, with the exception of potatoes, being supplied from our own garden area.

Under the control of Principal Warder Lauder, the bootmaking factory has continued to furnish very satisfactory returns, and the orders placed by other Departments, as well as our own departmental requirements, have been ably and expeditiously handled throughout the year. Repairs to satchels on behalf of the Post and Telegraph Department continue to be executed in the bootshop, and in recent months orders for the manufacture of quite a number of new issues have been dealt with.

Warder Instructor Kinghorn remains in charge of the tailoring shop, the output from which has been well maintained, and, in addition to our own requirements, those of other Departments have been readily met, and the returns have been well up to the standard of previous years.

Repairs to mail and parcel bags have been carried out for the Post and Telegraph Department and the work has been handled in an expeditious manner.

With the exception of blankets, the whole of the prison laundering and the repairs to socks continues to be executed by female labour, and the small cost to the Department is a pleasing reflection upon the administration of this division. Soft laundering has also been performed as required for the Police, Public Trust, Internal Affairs, and Defence Departments during the year.