

The conduct and industry of the prisoners has been excellent, a noticeable feature for some years past being the absence of offences by prisoners against officers.

As in former years, the quarry has absorbed the majority of prison labour and is our main source of revenue. The sales of quarry material, however, show a considerable decline, there being very little demand since the restoration of the town was completed. We have a large quantity of heavy stone on hand which it is anticipated will be disposed of shortly in the building of the harbour-works.

Our vegetable garden has provided us with a liberal supply of vegetables throughout the year, our onion crop being very successful. Sufficient potatoes were grown to supply our requirements for six months, in addition to supplying Gisborne Prison for several months. Owing to the present dry season our potato and onion crops will be much lighter than last year.

The health of the prisoners has been good, and there were no admissions to hospital during the year.

Divine services were conducted by ministers of the various denominations weekly throughout the year, and the Salvation Army band under Adjutant Goffin visited monthly.

The Napier Brotherhood, under the Rev. E. T. Olds, visited fortnightly and conducted community sings for an hour in the evenings.

Members of the Gospel Hall Choir, consisting of about thirty voices, sang to us on the Sunday before Christmas, and their visit was very much appreciated.

The thanks of the Department were tendered to Mr. Husheer, of the National Tobacco Co., for his gift of tobacco to the prisoners, also to members of the Gospel Hall and to Mr. J. P. Thomson for their gifts of extra eatables.

I provided wireless broadcasts of items of interest at intervals throughout the year.

In conclusion, I desire to express my appreciation of the co-operation of the staff of the prison throughout the year.

NEW PLYMOUTH PRISON.

(Superintendent, Mr. W. DINEEN.)

There were 64 male prisoners in custody at the beginning of the year, 117 were admitted, 73 were discharged, and 46 were handed to the Police or transferred to other prisons, leaving 62 in custody on the 31st December, 1934.

The Medical Officer has visited regularly once a week and prescribed and attended to any prisoner who may have required his care. There was no serious illness, except that one man was sent to Public Hospital for surgical treatment of an old-standing complaint.

The general conduct of the prisoners has been good. Six prisoners were ordered to undergo solitary confinement, two of these being charged with attempted escape.

As in previous years, an endeavour has been made to counteract the mental depression that is apt to prevail among men, such as those serving long terms of imprisonment for sexual offences, at this prison. With this end in view, and with the assistance of the Rotary Club and other kindred clubs and citizens of New Plymouth, many lectures and entertainments have been provided at the prison. The prisoners are encouraged to take an active part in these entertainments and lectures, and one feels that the effort that the men make in preparing and getting ready for these has a beneficial effect on their mentality.

The spiritual welfare of the prisoners has been well looked after by the ministers of the several denominations. Divine service is held every Sunday. Mrs. Eason has continued her weekly visits; she and her associates have also provided their annual special Christmas tea to the prisoners. This is an event eagerly looked forward to by prisoners who, owing to the length of their sentences, have had previous experience of the tea, which is the subject of general conversation for many weeks before and after the event.

Mr. Oscar Johnston, a retired headmaster, has continued to conduct his weekly educational class for those men who are desirous of improving their education up to the sixth standard. This is a work of great benefit to the men, and Mr. Johnston is entitled to the Department's best thanks for his untiring and unselfish effort to improve the minds of the prisoners.

The cottages occupied by members of the prison staff have had a complete outside overhaul and have been reconditioned and repainted. The roof of the prison has also been reconditioned and painted. The whole of the work has been carried out by prison labour. A commencement has been made with alterations to the bathing-accommodation, and when completed these additions will provide bathing-facilities that will permit of each prisoner having at least two hot baths a week and a cold shower daily, if deemed advisable by the Medical Officer.

Work in the quarry has been continued, as in previous years, with good results. The whole of the output has been sold to the New Plymouth Borough Council. The party of prisoners working in the garden has produced sufficient vegetables to allow of a generous daily ration to each prisoner and also enough to permit a surplus of a lorry load being sent weekly to auction for sale.

The practice of purchasing stock on the hoof for slaughtering to provide the prison meat-ration has been continued and has, as in preceding years, resulted in a considerable saving in the cost of rations and also an improvement in the quality and quantity of the meat supplied to the prisoners. This system has also the advantage of providing certain prisoners with the opportunity of being able to acquire a good working-knowledge of the slaughtering trade.