

inconvenience to the officers by their conduct. It is satisfactory, however, to report that the conduct and industry of the large majority of men serving long terms who have been tried out at country institutions have been exemplary, and the change appears to have had a beneficial effect upon many of them.

The standard of industry among the inmates of prisons and Borstals has been well maintained during the past year. The various works on which the men are engaged are conducted by the officers in charge in an intelligent and efficient manner, and every reasonable effort is made to encourage each individual inmate to take an interest in his own particular work in order that he may be better fitted to rehabilitate himself on release. As a result of experience gained on prison farms, a very considerable number of ex-inmates obtain employment as farm hands, and the Superintendents of the two Borstal institutions are not infrequently approached by farmers who require milkers and teamsters. This is an indication that the training in general farm work received by Borstal detainees is recognized by local farmers as being of a high standard.

The improvements in the ration scale during the past few years are appreciated by the prisoners as a whole. It is generally admitted by the men that the food is satisfactory in quality and sufficient in quantity, and the fact that the vast majority of prisoners and Borstal inmates increase in weight during their detention is an indication that wholesome food is supplied. Requests for further concessions in food and tobacco, however, are occasionally made, but invariably the applicant is of the persistent recidivist class who, no doubt, desires to see "inside" conditions better than "outside."

Considerable attention is being given to institutional libraries, and arrangements are made at intervals for additional supplies of suitable books. The library at Auckland Prison is being thoroughly overhauled, and the system of records, &c., reorganized on up-to-date lines. At the Borstals the libraries are reasonably well stocked, and an adequate supply of magazines and illustrated weekly papers are provided at all prisons and Borstal institutions. Inmates at the prison camps are informed that if they are desirous of improving their education they will be given facilities to obtain free tuition through the Education Department's Correspondence School.

The officers continue to take a keen interest in their duties, and, while maintaining a satisfactory standard of discipline, they endeavour to study the temperaments and dispositions of those under their care. This tends to create a better understanding and a greater measure of mutual confidence. With the exception of the so-called strike at the Auckland Prison, which occurred after the end of the year covered by this report, and which has been dealt with separately, very little trouble has been experienced at any of the prisons or Borstals during the past eighteen months. In prison, as elsewhere, the agitator finds scope for pursuing his hobby of causing strife, and the comparatively little support he receives from his fellow-prisoners is, I think, a tribute to the efficiency of the prison system. It is remarkable, however, the encouragement he receives from various quarters during his periods of liberty. Not only do his statements, which frequently contain not a vestige of truth, receive much publicity, but some misguided and ill-informed people, who have little or no comprehension either of the prison system or of the refractory material which prison officials have sometimes to deal with, are ever ready to accept his statements, however fantastic, without question. When the agitator and his credulous friends meet and collaborate, allegations of the most ridiculous nature are made concerning prison administration, and these are given as much publicity as the promoters are capable of arranging. This propaganda by the agitator "without" is intended to assist the agitator "within" in creating among prisoners discontent and opposition to authority, and its failure to achieve this purpose is due to the fact that the better class of prisoners realize that they are both fairly and humanely treated.

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