

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

AUCKLAND PRISON.

(Superintendent, Mr. J. DICKISON.)

At the commencement of the year there were 288 males and 20 females in custody. During the year 976 males and 38 females were received, whilst 998 males and 47 females were discharged, or otherwise disposed of, leaving in the prison on the night of 31st December, 1935, 266 males and 11 females.

In 1933 there was a decrease of 402 receptions as compared with 1932, 1934 showed a further decrease of 152, whilst during the year under review the number received was 93 lower than in the previous year. Thus, whilst in 1932 the receptions totalled 1,661, only 1,014 were admitted in 1935, a reduction of 647 over a period of three years.

This rather striking comparison is in itself conclusive proof of the practical value of the many changes made in the New Zealand penal system during recent years, all of which have been very carefully framed with the sole idea of making detention mainly corrective, rather than purely punitive.

With isolated exceptions, the prisoners have been found to respond very willingly to the facilities afforded them, and, on discharge, with the splendid system of co-ordination provided by the various after-care societies, they have obviously had a greatly increased chance of making good. The figures quoted above leave no doubt that the majority of prisoners discharged during the past few years have taken full advantage of the opportunity of rehabilitating themselves in society.

There were no escapes from this institution during the year under review.

It is pleasing to report that there were no executions during 1935.

It is regretted, however, that 4 inmates died during the twelve months whilst undergoing medical treatment at the Auckland District Hospital.

The previous splendid standard of health has been well maintained during the year, a fact which is readily confirmed by the figures from the daily sick muster, which reads—Daily average of males sick, 4·361; females, nil.

With a daily average of 306 prisoners in custody, and the reception of 1,014 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. This is a tribute, I consider, to the assiduity of the Prison Medical Officer, Dr. C. H. Tewsley, in fulfilling the onerous duties attaching to his position.

The willing co-operation of the Medical Superintendent of the Auckland Mental Hospital in arranging for examination of mental defectives continues to be of material assistance to the Department.

Towards the end of the year the Prison Schoolmaster, Mr. L. Grice, M.A., was transferred away from Auckland, and his place was taken by Mr. W. Dale, M.A., Dip.Ed.

With an average roll number of 28, the school is held on three nights weekly, and, in his annual report, the Schoolmaster reports that all prisoners have been actuated by a real desire to improve their educational status, the members of the lower classes having shown very conclusively that they value the opportunity which the school offers them. Eight prisoners sat for their Certificate of Proficiency, and all were successful. For the men above Standard VI, courses have been given along lines of interest and related work, the interest developed in the related subjects being of material value on release, the pupils having been given the opportunity of making themselves acquainted with the latest developments in the related field of their own outside occupations.

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 proper, whilst the upkeep of the prison officers' cottages has received adequate attention.

The prison 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.

A number of prisoners have been employed throughout the year in the bootmaking factory under the supervision of Principal Warder Lauder, 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 boot-shop, and in recent months orders for the manufacture of quite a number of new issues have been dealt with.

The output from the tailoring-factory 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 is carried on in conjunction with the tailoring, and, as in past years, the whole of the annual demands of the Post and Telegraph Department have been expeditiously handled.