

The health of the prisoners has been good. There was one case of severe illness—a man suffered a stroke and was removed to the New Plymouth Public Hospital for treatment. The Medical Officer makes regular visits at least once a week, and special visits as often as he may be required. He devotes a lot of time in making psychological and psychiatric investigation into each man's case. The general conduct of the prisoners has been good. There have been no escapes or attempted escapes during the year. The reformatory value of permitting prisoners to give and receive uplifting entertainment from outside has been fully recognized and taken advantage of. The Rotary Club have paid fortnightly visits and have provided first-class entertainment. The fact that homo-sexual prisoners are allowed to see an audience from the outside world and listen to their effort to uplift and benefit them has a wonderful anti-depression effect. Men here are encouraged to take an active part in entertainments, and it is decidedly noticeable what a beneficial effect it has on their demeanour. At first they are shy, nervous, and backward, but this gradually wears off, and in time they are able to stand before an audience and do their part in a manly way. This improvement has been particularly beneficial to some of the prisoners after their release. Cases are known of these men going after employment and openly telling their prospective employers that they have just been released after serving long sentences, and have used that fact as the reason why they would prove satisfactory if given employment. The attendance and taking part in these entertainments gives men who were troubled with inferiority complexes self-assurance and confidence in themselves. This is particularly noticeable in New Plymouth, where at least three ex-prisoners who served long sentences on release obtained employment here and have since set up in business on their own account, and are apparently making a success of their lives.

Divine services are held each Sunday by clergymen of the various denominations. No prisoner is compelled to attend any service, except that of his own particular denomination. Mrs. Eason has continued her work of visiting and cheering the prisoners. With the aid of several willing helpers, she again provided splendid Christmas tea for all the prisoners. It is gratifying to be able to record the fact that many (some from other countries) wrote thanking her for past assistance and guidance, and enclosed contributions towards the cost of Christmas cheer.

The physical-drill class under the leadership of one of the prisoners (a qualified instructor) has continued to practice weekly. They have given several displays to visitors at the prison. One of these displays was given in the presence of the Hon. the Minister of Justice and the Controller-General of Prisons. Both gentlemen addressed the class after the display and congratulated the men on the excellent performance they had given.

To enable any prisoner who cared to take advantage of it, a class, under a prisoner who has eighteen years' teaching experience in secondary schools in New Zealand, has been conducted each week. The object of this class is to provide the assistance necessary to enable prisoners to obtain a proficiency pass.

The baking of bread required for this and the Wanganui Prison has continued, and this industry has again provided means of teaching some prisoners the baking trade.

The meat necessary for the prisoners' rations has all been purchased on the hoof and slaughtered and dressed by prison labour. All stock slaughtered is subject to inspection by the Stock Department.

I am indebted to the staff for its loyal support during the year.

PAPARUA PRISON.

(Superintendent, Mr. C. E. SPITAL.)

I have the honour to submit the annual report on this institution for the year ended 31st December, 1936.

On the first day of the year under review there were 128 males in custody. During the year 425 were received and 452 discharged or otherwise disposed of, leaving a total of 101 males in custody at the end of the year. The greatest number in custody at any one time was 157 and the least number 101, with a daily average of 127.139.

Generally the health of the prisoners has been very good, sickness in most cases being confined to colds and minor complaints. Two inmates were admitted to the public hospital during the year. One of these was an advanced tubercular case and subsequently died in hospital. This was the only death during the year. With a daily average of 127.139 in custody and the reception of 425 individuals during the twelve months, the low rate of sickness demonstrates the attention which is given to the important matter of the health of the inmates during incarceration. There were 9 males received into prison suffering from venereal disease, and these cases required segregation, and in one case lengthy curative treatment.

During the year 11 males were transferred to the Sunnyside Mental Hospital. I wish to express my appreciation of the co-operation of the Medical Superintendent of the Christchurch Mental Hospital in expeditiously dealing with mental defectives.

The conduct of the prisoners generally has been very good. Breaches of the regulations numbered 39, and 21 were dealt with by Visiting Justices, while 18 were dealt with by myself. There were no escapes or attempted escapes during the year.

I regret to record the death of Mr. G. Maginness, who for a number of years carried out the duties of a Visiting Justice at this institution.

The food-supplies have been of an excellent quality, with a plentiful supply of vegetables from the prison garden. The bread produced in the institution bakery has also been of excellent quality and has been most favourably commented on by visitors.

The industries of the prison and the farming operations have fully absorbed all available labour. The shingle industry continues to show good results, and large demands have continuously been made on our resources, but with our declining muster it is obvious that unless mechanized appliances are brought to our aid the output must suffer considerably and be detrimental to cartage contractors.