

a useful and interesting form of employment for the prisoners. Cattle are grazed for killing for rations, the beef diet having been varied with mutton at different times throughout the year. The killing is done by the prisoners, and all meat is inspected by the Stock Inspector before being used.

In general it can be stated that the conduct of the prisoners has been good. Five cases of breaches of discipline were dealt with by the Visiting Justices. One was an attempt to smuggle uncensored correspondence out of the prison, and another was an attempt to smuggle forbidden articles into the prison.

There have been no escapes or attempts to escape during the year.

All working-parties are under constant direct supervision; and during the week-ends, when vigilance is particularly necessary owing to the nature of the offences for which these men are imprisoned, officers are especially on the alert.

The health of the prisoners on the whole has been good, with two exceptions. One was a case of pneumonia which was treated successfully at the prison, the patient making a complete recovery. The Medical Officer visits the prison regularly, and has given the utmost attention to the prisoners, being always available when called specially. Prisoners who are ill are given every attention by the Medical Officer and by the prison staff.

A welcome innovation during the year from the point of view of the prisoners has been the introduction of a fish ration for prisoners serving over two years.

The increased leisure hours (due to the forty-hour week) of the prisoners are being well occupied during the week-ends. The men are encouraged to learn music and quite a number have taken advantage of this privilege. A few can now play the piano and other instruments fairly well. The main object is, of course, to occupy their minds in a beneficial way. Some of the men play chess and draughts in the yards during the week-ends. The Rev. F. Hart has earned our thanks by his efforts on behalf of the prison orchestra. He has attended on many Saturdays to conduct the orchestra in practices, and this in itself has been a great stimulant to the men.

The prison Debating Society has continued to hold a debate once weekly during the year, and it is evident from the conduct of the men that these debates have done an immense amount of good, both in increasing their general knowledge and also in giving them a little self-confidence, enabling them to stand up and place their views before others in a clear and lucid manner. Thanks are also due to the members of the New Plymouth Debating Society for the assistance they have given us in this direction and for the debates to which they have contributed during the year.

The New Plymouth Chess and Draughts Club visited the prison once a month during the year, and these evenings provided a useful and beneficial topic of conversation, as well as an enjoyable diversion for the men.

During the year the game of Badminton was introduced into the prison, and it is safe to say that this is easily the most popular innovation that has taken place. The game was introduced to the men by the members of the New Plymouth Badminton Club, and it caught hold at once. Our thanks are due to the members of the club who have visited the prison on various nights to give exhibition games and to instruct the prisoners in the fine points of the game. Most privileges pall on this class of men after a time, but there has been no falling off in the interest displayed in Badminton.

Through the instrumentality of Toc H, Mr. G. Wigley has continued with his leather-work classes throughout the year, and although the class is small, the members are very enthusiastic, and the work, which is done in their own time while they are in their cells, must be very beneficial.

Numerous prison concerts have been held throughout the year, and the new concert platform and stage scenery was put into use and created a very favourable impression. Concerts are well supported by the local residents, and on one occasion a special invitation was extended to the residents of Waitara, a large number of whom attended. The concerts have the effect of keeping the minds of the prisoners busily occupied during their spare time, for even those who are not engaged in the performance are pressed into service for the manufacture of equipment.

Band concerts were given during the year by the Municipal Band, the Salvation Army Band, the Waitara Band, and the Pipe Band of the New Plymouth Caledonian Society; this latter evening was much appreciated, and included the ceremony of bringing the haggis. As in the past, the New Plymouth Rotary Club gave many excellent entertainments during the year. Our thanks are due to all these societies for their generous efforts on behalf of the prisoners. It will be appreciated that no effort has been spared to take the men out of themselves and to give them elevating and beneficial entertainment.

The annual tea given by Mrs. Eason towards the end of the year was, as usual, a great success. Mrs. Eason and her band of lady assistants worked for the whole afternoon in decorating the Central Hall and the supper tables in order to make the evening a success. Musical items were given and enjoyed, and the evening closed with speeches from different prisoners thanking Mrs. Eason and her committee for the many good things provided, and wishing her success in her work.

The ministers of the various denominations visited the prison throughout the year, and the spiritual welfare of the men was well cared for.

The Department is under a debt of gratitude to the very many citizens who assisted during the year by their presence at concerts and in other ways in showing the men that society is still willing to help them, and so stimulate their endeavours to be useful and law-abiding citizens on their release.

PAPARUA PRISON.

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

On the 1st January, 1938, there were in custody 88 male prisoners; during the year the receptions totalled 525, while 534 were discharged or otherwise disposed of, thus leaving a total of 79 prisoners in custody as at 31st December. The greatest number in custody at any one time was 109, the least 69, and the daily average over the period 98.48.