

1883.
NEW ZEALAND.

REPORT OF INSPECTOR OF PRISONS.

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

The INSPECTOR OF PRISONS to the Hon. the MINISTER of JUSTICE.

SIR,—

Office of Inspector of Prisons, Wellington, 1st May, 1883.

I have the honour to report, for your information, that I have visited the different prisons in the colony during the twelve months ending the 31st December last, on the dates stated in the annexed return marked L, and have generally found them clean and in good order, the prisoners healthy, and the sanitary arrangements properly attended to.

2. I regret to state that I have been unable to visit many of the smaller police gaols, owing to their isolated positions, and the difficulties in getting to them; but I have devoted greater attention to those larger prisons to which I considered my frequent visits more necessary than to the smaller ones where prisoners are seldom confined.

3. The conduct of the prisoners generally has been good, and there are no really serious prison offences to report, with the exception of a threatened *émeute* at Lyttelton, which occurred soon after and in connection with the introduction of the classification scheme, referred to in paragraph 17 of my last report; but, owing to the prompt action taken by the Visiting Justices, it was immediately quelled with very little punishment.

4. During the past year there have been 262 punishments inflicted for prison offences, including 21 cases of additional imprisonment—viz., at Dunedin, 12; Invercargill, 6; Lyttelton, 2; and Wellington Terrace, 1. This compares favourably with the previous year, when there were 341 prison punishments inflicted, including 21 cases of additional imprisonment—viz., at Dunedin 20, and Auckland 1. A detailed statement of the punishments and additional sentences for prison offences for the past year will be found in Returns marked M and N, respectively, appended.

5. Six escapes occurred during the year—viz., three male prisoners from Wanganui, and one from Auckland; one female prisoner from Addington, and one from Wellington Terrace. All were recaptured.

6. There has been very little sickness, as will be seen from Return marked B. One case of typhoid fever occurred in Auckland Prison, but it did not prove fatal, and there was no further spread of the disease.

7. There has been no case of suicide in the prisons during the year.

8. The supplies of rations, fuel, clothing, necessaries, and medical comforts have been good, and no complaints have been made regarding any of these articles.

9. During the year two prisoners have been executed, both Maoris—viz., one at Auckland, and the other at New Plymouth—and in both instances the sentences were reported to have been properly carried out. The same hangman was employed at both executions.

10. Divine service has been held at the various prisons every Sunday, and on Christmas Day and Good Friday, as directed by the regulations, and has generally been conducted by clergymen. Lay-readers and lady visitors have attended at many of the prisons, and have done much good by reading to and advising prisoners.

11. During the year fourteen deaths have occurred in prisons, exclusive of executions—viz., twelve male and two female prisoners. In every instance a Coroner's inquest was held, and a verdict of "Death from natural causes" returned.

12. All complaints or requests made by prisoners to me have been duly investigated and attended to, and their petitions invariably submitted to His Excellency for his consideration.

13. The progressive-stage system of classification, including a gratuity scale, stated in my last report as then on trial at Lyttelton Prison, having been found to work satisfactorily, has been introduced into all the prisons of the colony; and though, in consequence of the condition of many of the existing buildings, the classification cannot be carried out in its entirety, still a uniform system of visits to prisoners and of correspondence with them has been esta-